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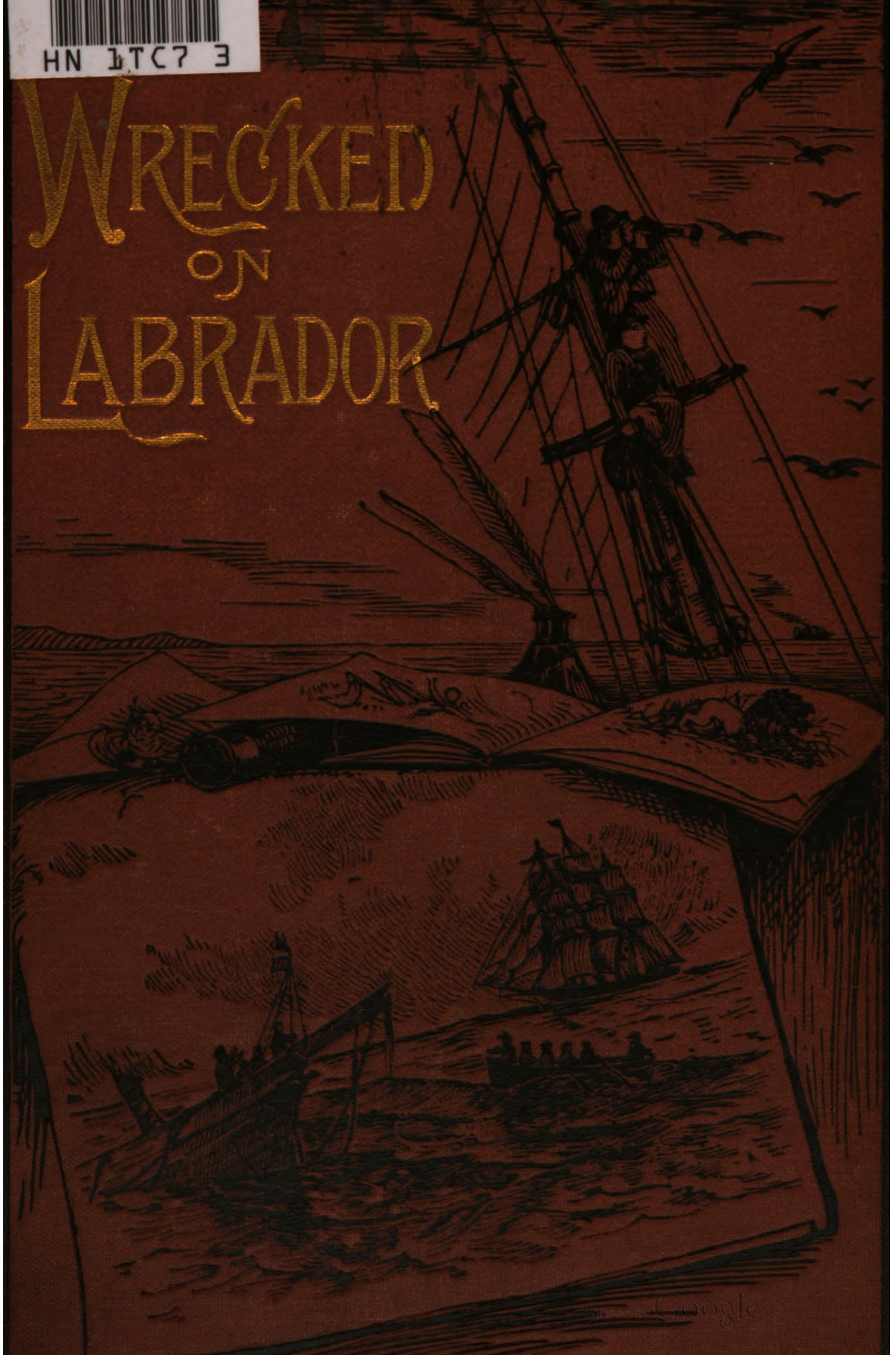

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INTRODUCTION.

THE adventures of the Benton Family in their two trips to Labrador are based upon personal experiences.

The story is, in large measure, a transcript of the writer's own diary; but the characters described would never be identified, since, in most cases, their individualities are taken and combined from many people whom he met in his numerous visits to that region, covering a period of thirteen years.

The intention has been to present in a simple and natural way to young readers some knowledge of a comparatively unknown land, and yet the one first visited and peopled on the New Continent, the claim to its discovery having been disputed by the English, French, Welsh, Irish, Icelanders, and Norsemen.

The customs and habits in "the Labrador" are decidedly archaic remnants of the life of nearly three centuries ago; that is, the manners and customs of the people living in Labrador at the present time are quite similar to those which obtained in England and France in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The majority of the early inhabitants were French fishermen.

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Another thought has actuated the writer. It is that of interesting the young of both sexes in the study of natural history. To them he would say: "Do not wait to discover a new region before collecting specimens for forming a museum of natural history. Begin at once! Begin anywhere! Your own door-yards will furnish you wonders which you had not previously even suspected. First learn *how* to collect and study, and your interest will soon awaken for further investigations in a field practically limitless in the enticing pleasures by which it allures you toward nature, and from nature to nature's God."

W. A. S.

CAMBRIDGEPORT, May 10, 1888.

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WRECKED ON LABRADOR.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

THE ADVERTISEMENT.

"WIFE!"

"Well, John."

"I wonder what this means?"

"I must certainly know to what you refer, in order to answer your question with any degree of intelligence."

"H'm, yes!" said Mr. Benton, as he looked up from the paper which he was busy reading — at the same time lifting his coffee-cup from the table, and taking a slow, steady, and apparently satisfactory drink at its contents. "H'm, yes! Read it yourself, read it yourself, — aloud." And Mr. Benton passed the paper over to his wife, while he proceeded to the more solid enjoyment of the remaining contents of his coffee-cup and the small end of a brown roll, thickly spread with fresh, home-made butter.

Mrs. Benton, thus apostrophized, carefully adjusted her spectacles and proceeded as follows:

"OFF FOR LABRADOR.

The fast-sailing schooner, *North Star*, will leave Rowe's Wharf, Boston, on Wednesday, July 19th, (three weeks from date,) for a

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summer's cruise in this new and most fascinating region, for the purpose of shooting, fishing, exploring, and pleasuring. The trip will occupy eight weeks, and excursionists are expected to provide themselves with all things needful before leaving, so as to prevent delay at any of the vessel's stopping places. A special circular will be sent to all who apply, telling just what to get and where to get it. Come! to the region of seals, ducks, gulls, trout, salmon, and icebergs.

Write at once for particulars to, or call on,

R. U. READY,
17 Noland Wharf, Boston, Mass."

Mrs. Benton folded the paper carefully and laid it upon the table; then she glanced over the rims of her spectacles in the direction of Mr. Benton — just as that gentleman, having finished his coffee and replaced the cup in its saucer, adjusted his eyeglasses, and beamed towards his partner opposite.

"H'm, yes, h'm-m-m!"

Just what Mr. Benton's reflections were will appear later; Mrs. Benton, however, understood them fully.

The scene of the above conversation was a pleasant, old-fashioned house, a few miles out, "in the country," from Boston, and within an easy walk of the railroad station. It had a large lawn about it; it was some distance from the road; and it was surrounded by hedges, and trees, and bushes of every sort. The dining-room was enlivened by the view of a small pond from one window, and of the broad lawn from the other. The table was occupied at the time of which we are writing, by Mr. and Mrs. Benton alone. These two, however, were not the only members of the Benton family. There were, besides, John, Allie, and Freddie — May and Eva.

Freddie, the youngest boy, was a smart lad of eleven; Allie, thirteen, though rather lazy, was, nevertheless, the

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pet at home and the oracle among the boys of the neighborhood; John, the eldest, twenty years of age, was a shrewd young fellow and, in some respects, the head of the household — to whom the father intrusted many responsibilities. John and Freddie, strange to say, were boon companions. Of the daughters, Eva was the youngest, being scarcely yet seven, while May was fifteen, and a great favorite among the young fellows of her acquaintance.

Such were the names and ages of the Benton children. Let us look at some of their *personalities:*

John was a capital fellow — he was just entering college, and had, so far, proved himself *first* in every study which he had undertaken; he was particularly partial to the sciences. Allie, though the home child, seemed characteristically lazy. He spent most of his time in his workshop, having fitted up a fine one in the rear part of his father's large barn. Here he spent the greater part of the day, as John said, "foolin' away his time buildin' 'Jack-houses,'" or drawing imitations of what apparently seemed to John some "house that Jack built." Freddie and John were the best of friends and told each other all their secrets. When John was away Freddie occupied his time in taking long tramps, with his gun for his companion and a pocket full of fish hooks and lines; the woods and fields were full of birds, the streams of fishes, — and there was abundance of bait under the boards and stones which lined the water's edge. Yet he was full of fun, too; always around when there were any "good times" going on. So it came to be almost a saying, with the whole family, that wherever you saw Freddie you "never knew where to find him next." "There never was a *better* brother in this

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world!" May said, and "May ought to know!" so Eva thought. Now Eva, who stayed home most of the time, did nothing and almost thought nothing without first consulting her *oracle*, May. May was, naturally, chief head of the younger portion of the family. Her nature was warm, but impulsive, quick, and authoritative. She helped her mother considerably in the care of the household, in spite of her age; and this, of itself, gave her the conceit to be belle of the surrounding neighborhood.

These were the children of Mr. and Mrs. Benton, and a "happier, merrier, better-natured and upright set o' youngsters there never was." This was the verdict of Mary, the cook, who had lived with the family some twenty odd years, and, therefore, felt herself capable of judging.

Mary was a large, fat, and jolly servant-maid — nearly forty years of age, and "perfectly devoted to the family."

We can better understand, now, why it was Mr. Benton, after seeing the paragraph referred to in the paper, looked over to his wife and nodded his head so furiously, winked so violently, and, clearing his throat, h'm-m-m-ed and oh-oh-ed with such apparent satisfaction. Did he anticipate a surprise to anybody or any number of bodies? We shall see later on.

Mr. Benton himself was a stout, thick-set, middle-aged gentleman, with gray hair, and small, but pleasant looking, gray eyes. Though on occasions he betrayed a rather nervous temperament, yet, generally, he was of a very placid disposition and a characteristic, sagacious business manager. Mrs. Benton, his wife, was tall, and decidedly nervous, both in manner and disposition, especially if in the least irritated; though a very efficient housekeeper.

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On the present occasion, after Mrs. Benton had not frowned, when Mr. Benton's eyes met hers; and when the latter h'm-m-ed at the table-cloth, to his own apparent satisfaction; both arose and retired to the library, where they remained together for a few moments, in earnest conversation; at the end of that time they departed; the one, going to the closet, donned a travelling duster, and, taking his umbrella in his hand, started for the door, simply saying, "Well, my dear, then I may not be home to dinner," — he left the house and walked rapidly in the direction of the railroad station. Mrs. Benton returned immediately to her work of arranging the dishes, and, but for an occasional "humph," or a "well, I suppose so," no one could have imagined the weighty problems which she was turning over in her mind.

In a few minutes Mr. Benton had reached the railroad station and stood, with others on the platform, awaiting the train. This soon arrived, with a whiz and a crash that was enough to fairly make one deaf, and off jumped the conductor, shouting out, at the top of his voice:

"Express for Boston! This train does not stop again until it reaches Boston."

Some of the passengers bustled out into the station to wait for the accommodation which would leave them at some way-station, but the most of them, among whom was Mr. Benton, were on their way to the great city; so the seats were quickly all filled, and the train soon in motion again.

Mr. Benton *was* a little nervous, in spite of himself and his efforts to look and appear in his usual calm and collected manner. He had found a comfortable seat, near the window, and now took out his paper, which he had brought with him, and carefully adjusting his eye-

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glasses, he began to turn the paper in every direction but the right one, — apparently with the desire to read it, and to read something special in it, for which he seemed to be eagerly searching.

After a great deal of trouble the right place was at last found and Mr. Benton began to read:

"Off for Labrador. The fast schooner *North Star*, etc., —" "Let me see, again!" exclaimed Mr. Benton to himself: "will leave Rowe's Wharf —, July 19th; etc. Write for particulars to, or call on, R. U. Ready, 17 Noland Wharf, Boston, Mass."

After studying the paragraph for some fifteen minutes, Mr. Benton took a pencil from his pocket, made a memorandum upon the margin of his paper, folded it so that the writing should appear upon the outside edge, and, replacing the pencil, tucked the paper into the upper left-hand pocket of his duster, with a "h'm-m-m-m!" that caused his next neighbor fairly to jump, and everybody in the car, close enough to hear it, to look up in surprise.

The train was quite full. The air was close and stifling. Most of the gentlemen sat, with their windows open, reading, eating oranges or bananas, or trying to nap away the time with their caps over their eyes, and their heads and bodies in every conceivable position. — Mr. Benton sat up very straight, and then turned and gazed for a moment down the car; then he turned back and, settling himself into as comfortable an attitude as he could, tried to nap like the others. But it was no use! To-day, for a wonder, he had really too much on his mind to sleep or do anything but wait for the coming and going of the tedious minutes — until he should get the irritating business over with, satisfactorily.

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At last the car door opened and the conductor came in for the tickets; five minutes afterwards it opened again, and the brakeman shouted out, with a voice that wakened everybody in the car:

"Boston, Boston! All out!"

Everybody started up with a grand rush for the door, and, in a minute more, the car had stopped at the depot, and all were on the move for their various destinations. Mr. Benton fairly steamed towards a horse car, which he saw in the distance and which had a long, green stripe upon it, and the sign "Atlantic Avenue" painted upon a white board above it. After considerable effort he succeeded in attracting the driver's attention, who stopped the car. Mr. Benton got on, and was soon seated — mopping his face with a huge bandana, while being carried swiftly towards "17 Noland Wharf."

After a few moments the car stopped, before a long, low building, in which were a large crowd of men — all busily engaged in eating, either a late breakfast or an early dinner, — and Mr. Benton got off. Then he followed the sidewalk for a few rods until he came to a high, triangular-shaped brick building, which had a side entrance near the main street. Here he entered and ascended a flight of rickety, wooden steps, in a dark, narrow passage-way, to the second story. Then he turned into a very dirty, dingy entry, which he traversed, and knocked at a door, half wood and half glass, at its farther end.

In good keeping with all this dirt and dinginess was the apparition which responded to the knock, almost immediately, from a regular spider's nest of a little room which was not a bit cleaner than its surroundings.

When he saw Mr. Benton he opened his eyes very

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wide, and stared at him for about a minute without speaking; then he rubbed his eyes and stared again. — After much maneuvering he reached out a short arm, with a very full but flabby hand, at its extremity and said:

"Oh! how do you do?"

"Very well, thank you," said Mr. Benton. "Is this Mr. Ready?"

"Oh! yes! Walk right in!" said the little man. "Take a cheer!"

"My name, sir, is Benton, and I came to see you about your advertisement in the Boston paper this morning."

"Oh, certainly," said Mr. Ready, for it was indeed he, "walk right in and take a seat."

Mr. Benton walked in, and while so doing he had a chance to look at Mr. Ready a little closer, and see what kind of a man he was.

He was short, rather fat, and of a sort of leathery texture and appearance. He had frowsy, grayish hair, and scanty whiskers on his face. He appeared to be about forty years old, but he might have been sixty. He was dressed in black, but his clothes were so soiled that there was a decided gray appearance to the suit.

"Oh!" said Mr. Ready, after he had inspected the visitor from head to foot, much as one examines a tree. "Take a cheer, do! Plenty of 'em here, if you can only find a whole one."

As he said this, Mr. Ready beamed all over his countenance and passed a rickety chair for Mr. Benton to sit upon. — The latter, seeing a wooden settee in the rear of the room, next to the wall, and thinking it looked safer than the chair presented, went to it and sat down.

"Yes, very fine day," said Mr. Benton as he removed his hat.

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"Oh," said Mr. Ready. "So you saw the paper, did you?"

"Yes," said Mr. Benton, "and that is what I came to inquire about. Now give me all the information about the place that you can, for I have three sons, two of whom, if not all, I am thinking of sending away for a good time this summer, *if everything appears favorable.* Mind, I say, only *if everything appears favorable.*" And Mr. Benton trotted his knee most violently.

"Oh, yes!" said Mr. Ready, very eagerly, nodding his head much as if he were angling and had caught sight of a very big trout which he had determined should not escape him. "You never was there yourself?"

"Oh, no!" said Mr. Benton; "I know nothing about the place. Your circular this morning set me thinking that perhaps *the boys* might like to go! ah — a — *if everything appeared favorable*, you know;" and Mr. Benton nodded his head, and trotted his knee again, as if he also were angling, but with a very different sort of a tackle, however. "You've been there before, I suppose?"

During this conversation Mr. Ready had subsided into a large office chair, and was sitting in a pensive attitude, with his hands placed flat to each other resting on his closed knees; but upon being addressed, he suddenly brightened up, and exclaimed:

"Oh, yes! seven or eight times. I lived down there for three years!"

"Did you, indeed? Well, you must know the place pretty well, then."

"Oh, yes! That was about 1870, and since that time I've been '*down along,*' as they call it," — here Mr. Ready chuckled, and shut up his eyes to laugh — "nearly every

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year, and two or three parties have been down with me almost every time. I take a little party with me most always, you know, — and they all enjoy it, and want to go again. You see it is a new region for them, and it is something that they have never seen before, and they enjoy it; they have a good time, and are always glad they went."

As Mr. Ready said this he rubbed his hands, smiled with his eyes shut again, and, hitching his chair up until he was quite near Mr. Benton, he reached forward, and in a most mysterious manner tapped Mr. Benton's arm and said:

"Now, see here, sir! You send your boys along with me, and — and —" here Mr. Ready looked all about him, apparently to see if anybody else was listening, "and you go with 'um!" As he said this he gave Mr. Benton's arm a severe pinch, and retreated to an upright attitude with as much silent energy as if he had solved a most difficult problem and as if to say, "well, what do you think of that!"

Mr. Benton did not resent the good-natured familiarity and laughed, as did Mr. Ready also.

"Oh, I'm too busy, *I* can't go!"

"Why not?"

"Wh? h'm — h'm! why, I'd like to, really! I'd like to! What do you do there?"

"Do?" said Mr. Ready, "do? why everything, everything, nothing! Fish for trout, and shoot birds. Plenty fish! plenty birds. Do? we eat, drink, and sleep; smoke and enjoy life, as we sail, sail, sail! Or lay to, and crowd around the galley stove in rain or fog and tell stories. Do? why we do anything or nothing, — accordin'!"

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As Mr. Ready said this he looked all around him again, and gesticulated with his left hand (with the fingers spread somewhat apart) in the air, much like a sailor trying to see which way the wind blows by holding that member up against the breeze; so that he really looked quite enthusiastic, in spite of the little dark stairway, the dingy passage and door, and the small, dirty room.

The fish had dared to sniff at the bait; he had turned to smell of it; it had smelled nice, and he had nibbled, — more, had swallowed the bait, hook and all — and was now at the end of the line — dangling!

"When do you start?" asked Mr. Benton.

"On or about July 19th. The vessel will probably be ready to sail on that very day," replied Mr. Ready.

"Where do you start from?"

"From Rowe's Wharf, at high tide, in the afternoon."

"What are your terms?"

At the mention of the word terms, though outwardly Mr. Ready was calm enough, he felt much as a horse or mule who suddenly pricks up both ears while eyeing intently some object before him. Then he approached Mr. Benton very closely, and almost whispered, so low was his voice, as if he were really afraid to tell it out loud: "One hundred and fifty for one, two hundred and fifty for two, and fifty more for the small boy, and," — here he looked up, and all around him cautiously for a moment — then, giving Mr. Benton a slight dig in the arm with his forefinger, aloud, "give me what you like for yourself!"

At the mention of the *latter* portion of the terms Mr. Benton smiled, Mr. Ready fairly laughed, and both nodded good-humoredly at each other for several seconds, and Mr. Benton arose to go.

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"Oh, ah!" said Mr. Ready. "This way, a moment. You might like to see how we go!"

At this both went to the farther end of the room, and Mr. Ready took down a long rolled up chart, which he opened, and said:

"Ah, yes! Here it is! We start from Boston, so" (pointing with his finger to the place, and following along as he spoke); "touch at Halifax, then to Canso, and pass through the *Gut*, as it is called, stopping at Port Mulgrave in the center of the Gut on the left, where letters can be received and sent, and so on to Magdalen Islands, where we will stop a day or two; pass Bird Rock, when we will lay to, and shoot a few gannets; then strike the Labrador coast, along which we will go, stopping here and there to shoot birds and to fish, till we get ready to start for home. We shall be gone for about six or eight weeks, altogether. — Are you going?"

"Yes," said Mr. Benton, "but write to me if you think of anything more; here is my address. Good day."

"Oh, certainly! Good day! I'll write." And the door closed. Mr. Benton to hurry to catch the train for home, and Mr. Ready to light his pipe and reflect.

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CHAPTER II.

OFF FOR LABRADOR.

"OH, isn't this perfectly splendid?"

"It's just glorious!"

"Doesn't she sail like a duck out of water!"

"Who, what, sails like a duck out of water?" queried a tall, lank, but good-humored-looking individual, who, with his hands in his overcoat pockets, seemed trying to screw himself into the smallest possible compass, as if half-frozen, as he walked up to a group of three boys who had uttered the above exclamations. Before any of them could reply, a slightly fleshy gentleman, of middle age, called out, rather unnautically:

"Oh, Allie, — my boy! What did you tell me that bird was we just now passed on the *lew* of the vessel."

"That was a petrel, father!" replied Allie Benton, for it was he.

"Allie is very fond of birds, Mr. Taylor. He knows the name of nearly every one that he sees."

"Indeed!" replied Mr. Taylor, the tall, lank individual referred to, and who was, with the rest, "Off for Labrador," in the double capacity of tutor and companion for Mr. Benton's boys.

"Yes, sir! he once shot seven kinds, of an afternoon, and could tell the names of all of them, sir; of all of them. Let me see, Allie, we have seen gulls, hawks, and — and — a blue-leg."

"Yellow-leg, father."

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"Yellow-leg? oh, yes! Yellow-leg."

"We are getting very scientific, Mr. Taylor, very scientific; we mean to know something about these things, one of these days."

Just at this point the conversation was interrupted by Freddie, who sang out, in a loud, clear voice:

"Oh, father! father! look quick, there's a whale, — there she is; there she blows; see — see — quick; do you see her?"

"Yes, yes! where did you say?" exclaimed Mr. Benton, as he hastily returned and began scanning the water in every direction but the right one. "H'm, yes!"

"There she blows, again; look, quick, on the other side of the bow, now," said Fred.

"Certainly," said Mr. Benton, turning in the reverse direction, and of course again away from the object in question. At this moment the whale came so near the vessel that the noise of its spouting was distinctly audible to every one on deck, and, directed by the sound, Mr. Benton turned in the right direction in time to see the falling water as the huge animal's back disappeared beneath the waves. — "There it is, in very truth, my boys, and I hope that it will not come any nearer to us."

"Why not, father!" exclaimed Freddie. "Surely it would do no hurt to such a large vessel as ours."

"And, father," chimed in Allie, "I think it would be real fun, if he would come up right close to the ship and spout, then we could see him, and watch him."

Here the voice of John broke in upon the party, who were gathered just in front of the foremast of the vessel.

"I see five spouting at once! Three on the port and two on the larboard side."

"Why, John!" exclaimed Mr. Taylor; "taking the

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liberty of correcting you, the port and larboard side are the same. You mean the starboard and port."

By this time the whales had either disappeared entirely or were so far away in the distance as to be scarcely perceptible. Freddie had disappeared too. Mr. Benton looked all around for him, and not seeing him anywhere called him loudly by name. A very faint sound proceeded, seemingly, from the skies, and all hands looking upward saw Freddie, already nearly half-way up the rigging.

"Here I am! who called me?" replied the voice.

"Come down here, at once!" shouted Mr. Benton. "You are in a very dangerous position."

Mr. Benton then gazed very anxiously at his son to see him descend; while the other boys looked on in admiration and envy to see him so far above them, and in a position so peculiar, — so safe to a seaman.

Freddie did not wish to disobey his father, so he looked with longing, impatient eyes at the foretop, to which position he aspired, and with an "oh, dear!" began to descend. He reached the deck in safety, though severely rebuked both by his father and Mr. Taylor for attempting so rash a feat so soon after leaving home. Strangely he seemed to care less for the rebuke, however, than the applauding eyes of his brothers, who, as yet, had either not dared or not cared to attempt the climb.

All the boys now went to the bow of the schooner to watch the water as it dashed from the prow of the vessel; and the rainbows formed by the sun, as it shone through the sparkling foam, while Mr. Benton and Mr. Taylor retired to their easy steamer chairs just behind the vessel's mainmast and at the rear of the cabin.

"By the way, sir! how happened you to attempt this voyage?" asked Mr. Taylor, when once comfortably seated.

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"Well, sir!" responded Mr. Benton, "I hardly know myself. I saw Mr. Ready's advertisement, and made a special visit to his office, and came away so pleased with his representations, and with Mr. Ready himself, that I altered my plans, decided to go myself, got the boys ready, and here we are, sir!"

"You certainly displayed great energy in your preparations."

"Well, the thing seemed feasible, and I seldom do things by halves, sir! Mr. Taylor, you will observe that I seldom do things by halves!"

As if to illustrate what he had said, the vessel gave a tremendous lurch at that very moment, and Mr. Benton, arm-chair and all, fell sideways with a crash, on deck, while a cloud of spray dashed over the vessel, as if to wash him overboard through the scuppers.

Mr. Taylor was too much of a gentleman to laugh at anybody else's misfortune, but he inwardly smiled at the simile and its illustration as he helped Mr. Benton to his feet, and to shake the water from his clothes.

A few moments served to set matters right, however. Mr. Benton changed his coat and hat, after which the chair was wiped with a towel, and things were soon in order again. Mr. Benton moved his chair nearer to the mainmast that he might lay hold of one of the bitts of the pin-rail, in case of another encounter with the rolling waves, and for a time both parties remained silent. At length Mr. Taylor broke the silence.

"Let me see!" he said, "I believe we have as yet hardly ascertained who one's companions are, on the trip; supposing, sir, you lend me your pencil for a moment, and I will put their names down upon this envelope, so that we may see just who we have."

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"Certainly, most certainly, here it is!"

"Thank you, sir! Now let me see. — Here are Mr. Benton and his three sons, John, Allie, and Freddie; Mr. Ready, and his son, Jack; Mr. Murphy, Mr. Josephs, who is also a professor in a college; and myself. Let me see, is this all? Ah, no; I have forgotten one other gentleman whose name I have not yet ascertained. Besides these there are the cook Max, the captain and crew. This makes sixteen in all."

"Ah, indeed!" said Mr. Benton; "I think it a very pleasant party."

"It certainly seems so, thus far."

"Yes! I believe that we are all well pleased that our first day is drawing to so satisfactory a close."

"Indeed, sir! we may well congratulate ourselves upon the fact."

"Let me see! we have made some fifty miles since we started this morning, I suppose."

"It cannot be far from that. The breeze has been steady, and we are now and have been going at about the rate of six knots an hour. We left the city at ten o'clock, and it is now six."

"Is it, indeed! I was not aware that it was really so late."

"As it is now Wednesday, I suppose that we shall reach Halifax by Sunday at this rate."

"How far is Halifax?"

"Well, the captain tells us that it is about three hundred and fifty miles."

"We can then pass a quiet Sunday on shore," said Mr. Benton.

"Yes indeed, sir, but are we not getting ahead rather fast?"

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"Very true! but tell me, Mr. Taylor, what is that small hen-coop of a house, just behind the foremast there?"

"That is what we call the galley, sir."

"The galley?"

"Yes, sir. It is the cook-house, and that is the cook, Max, just going into it with a bucket of water in his hand. — A very accommodating fellow he seems to be. Mr. Ready tells me that he has been with him, — this makes the third time."

"We hope so, certainly; and will soon have an opportunity to test his good qualities, as it is nearly supper time."

At this moment the conversation was interrupted by Mr. Ready himself, who was seen balancing himself, as the vessel rolled gently about from side to side, as he attempted to walk along the deck to where Mr. Benton and Mr. Taylor were stationed. He soon reached and addressed them:

"Which would you gentlemen prefer: to have your supper in the cabin, on the table, or to have it served, sailor-fashion, here in the air on deck? You can take your stools to the gang-way, and place your dishes on the roof of the cabin and eat there very comfortably and very pleasantly; or you can have it served on the table inside the galley, — though you might find it rather close there, that is all."

"Ah; just what suits you will suit us, Mr. Ready," said Mr. Benton. "Your suggestion is an excellent one, sir; and we will take our stools and eat from the deck; I, for one, do not feel like going into the cabin while it is so pleasant out here, and much less like eating there."

At that moment a clear, ringing voice was heard all over the deck:

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"Supper, gentlemens!"

The words were no more than uttered than a loud tramping and hustling were heard as the three boys and as many grown men, — little better than boys, in fact, — came hurrying towards the galley door: where the good-natured Max stood, smiling good-humoredly as he passed up the plates of a steaming hot liquid that quickly penetrated the air with its fragrance, and announced itself as genuine *bean soup.*

"Ready for your supper, gentlemens?"

There was no need of any reply. The cook stood at the galley door, with a smile on his round, good-natured face, and a huge ladle in one hand while he passed out plates of steaming soup or piles of pilot biscuits with the other.

"Will any of you gentlemens have anything more?" he was continually asking.

After the soup came plates of biscuits and butter, and canned corned beef cut into tempting slices: with each of which was a cup of most delicious coffee, just off the fire and smoking hot.

Max fairly outdid himself. And even Mr. Benton, who was used to the very best of food, had no cause to complain of either quantity or quality.

After all had eaten, Max gathered the dishes together and began to wash them, while each wandered about deck as best suited him.

Mr. Benton and Mr. Taylor were soon again seated in their chairs, the former with a huge lap robe thrown over his knees, and the latter, with his legs crossed, indulging in what he pleasantly termed: "the comfortable folly of a paper cigar."

Mr. Murphy was seated on the top of the forecastle,

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industriously puffing away at a huge meerschaum pipe, and sending volumes of blue smoke into the face of the captain, whose head was just seen above the door with a short, dirty clay pipe in his mouth. The two seemed to be in very earnest conversation, and, as frequent looks from both were directed towards the sky and on all sides of the ship, one could very easily imagine that they were talking over the signs of the weather, as in fact they really were.

"Fair wind to-night, captain!"

"Yes, I suppose!"

"Shall you keep her on this tack all night?"

"Yes, I suppose!"

"Do you take your trick at the wheel?"

"Oh yes, I suppose!"

At this moment a merry, childish voice whispered:

"Did you ever get drunk? Yes, I suppose."

It was Allie's voice, and was not intended for anybody's ears but his brothers; but though uttered so low both the captain and Mr. Murphy heard it. The latter could not help smiling. The former turned his head, and his face scowled for a moment, but only for a moment, for he saw who it was, and the uselessness of getting out of temper with the good-humored though mischief-loving boy, as he took his pipe from his mouth and said, as he disappeared from the steps:

"I'll make you drunk, if I catch you, you young tommy cod."

With darkness came a strong west wind, which made the *North Star* scud through the water.

"How fast are we going now, captain?" asked Mr. Taylor, of the former, as he appeared on deck on his way to speak to the man at the wheel.

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"Oh, about seven knots," replied the captain. "If the wind holds out we'll be a good ways from Boston by morning."

"That's good," answered Mr. Taylor, as he was disappearing down the companion-way, "the farther the better."

When he reached the cabin he found Mr. Benton and the other gentlemen already hard at work arranging things for the night.

The cabin of the *North Star* was a compactly arranged little room, and very comfortable, withal. It was rather small for eight persons, though fully as large as the size of the vessel would allow — being about ten feet square. The bunks or berths were arranged on either side, while, on the right, the compartments were separated from the rest of the room and from each other by a partition and doors. There was a few feet of space, in these rooms, between the partitions and the berths, and, as they had sliding-doors, the parties could shut themselves in and feel as free and safe as if in a real ship's cabin. The berths were placed one above the other, and were simple, wide, low, box-like structures, like all ships' berths. There was a small closet, with washing arrangements and other necessities, just at the left of the companion-way, in an upper corner of which was a box containing the compass and a lamp for illuminating the face of the compass by night. Out of this closet led another small, dark cuddy, where the vessel's stores — not provisions — were kept. Just at the right of the companion-way, and between it and the first tier of bunks, was space for another storage closet, for the lighter and better articles of the men's luggage.

Mr. Taylor found, upon entering the cabin, that each

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berth had a neat white card, with the name of the person on it who was to occupy it. The first berth left, upon entering, was marked for Mr. Ready and his son. That below was assigned to the gentleman whose name he had been unable, until now, to ascertain. The name on the card read, "Mr. R. T. A. Furness."

On the same side, and adjoining, was placed Mr. Jacobs and Mr. Murphy. On the opposite side of the cabin, and in the further stateroom was Mr. Benton above, and two of his sons beneath; and in the other stateroom Mr. Taylor above and Mr. Benton's other son below. Thus the whole party were happily disposed for the trip.

The cabin table and floor were both covered with bags and boxes, bundles and parcels of all descriptions. Guns and fishing tackle were piled in the corners of the cabin, and great-coats, blankets, and pillows lay about promiscuously in every direction.

In one corner, a long-handled fish-net reached nearly to the ceiling, while in the opposite one a big pile of boxes was nearly covered up with several rubber overcoats, and on the floor beside them several pair of rubber boots lay heaped together regardless of owners.

Under the table was a big seaman's chest, which was the joint property of Mr. Ready and his son.

Over the table, just above each end, was a brass lamp, such as sailors use, made so as to swing to the motion of the vessel, and always keep in an upright position.

Between the lamps was a curious, old-fashioned round-faced clock, the wood-work of which was eight-sided, beneath which was an aneroid barometer. Between this and the lamp on the right-hand side was a thermometer, and in a similar position to the left a small almanac

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and pilot or guide book. Above all these was a neatly rolled chart, hung in a pair of tape loops; and below this, in smaller loops, a pair of dividers, a pencil, and a black parallel ruler for measuring directions upon the chart.

Just above the table, and below all these articles upon the wall, was a small, shallow closet or locker, running, with double doors, the whole width of the cabin. In these were shelves, loops, and braces for containing all sorts of small stores and articles necessary for the comforts of the voyage, — such as medicines, pens and ink, various bottles and glasses, small jars of rare and delicate preserves and extracts for sickness, with a large assortment of useful little articles intended for emergencies, so frequent upon a trip of this kind. Mr. Ready kept the key to these lockers, as he did to the storage closet next to the companion-way; but both were ready for use at a moment's notice.

Besides the articles described there was a rocker and a number of small wooden stands.

Thus the general arrangement of the interior of the cabin of the *North Star* was about as comfortable as it was possible to make it.

It showed, evidently, that the captain was a thorough seaman, and had things about as well provided as he could make them; while the additional touches of Mr. Ready were apparent at a glance; and we could easily see that everything possible had been prepared for the comfort of the passengers; but not only the comfort of the passengers seemed provided for, but their luxury also; for, besides the half dozen of small stools was a rocking-chair, and also a sort of a ship's easy-chair.

Most of the articles described were apparent at a

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glance to one coming into the cabin door, and Mr. Taylor spoke his approval, after a moment's inspection, to Mr. Furness, who was busily engaged in preparing his bunk in the opposite corner of the cabin.

"Things look quite snug here, Mr. Furness, don't you think so?" said Mr. Taylor.

As Mr. Furness's head was at that moment some three feet inside his bunk, and a small portion of his legs alone visible, his hearing apparatus was then not very acute.

A moment later, the remainder of his body and his head appearing, the question was repeated.

"Things look quite snug here, Mr. Furness, don't you think so?"

"Oh, were you calling my name?"

"Yes, and asking how you liked the appearance of our new quarters."

"Ah, very well, indeed. I think we shall soon be quite shipshape. I was trying to arrange my bunk and see which end to put the pillow on."

"I should imagine that there would be wind blowing on your head with your head nearest the door."

"I am inclined to that opinion myself, and shall try it so, at least for to-night. By the way, it would be a good idea if somebody would wind up our clock, which I see has run down."

"If I could find the key I would do so myself," said Mr. Taylor.

A few minutes' hunt soon revealed the missing article, and when the clock had been wound and set it was found to want six minutes of eight o'clock.

"There, that does look more shipshape!"

Just then the clatter and tramping of sundry pairs of feet were heard coming down the companion-way, with a

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stamping well calculated to strike terror into the heart of all lovers of quiet and good order, and in a moment more the door opened and the three boys rushed into the cabin.

"Oh, Mr. Taylor, where is our bunk?"

Three voices crying out for the same thing at the same time, are often apt to produce a slight confusion, but in the present case the chief question soon resolved itself into the fact that, as there were only two bunks for three to sleep in, it was at once obvious that two must sleep in one bunk.

John and Freddie at once settled this point of apparent controversy, as usual, by giving their brother the high bunk, and submitting themselves to be the pair who should double.

In about an hour's time, all were in order, with the exception of that of Mr. Murphy.

The boys declared that Mr. Murphy was still sitting on the top of the forecastle smoking his pipe.

As Allie said this the door opened and in walked Mr. Murphy, with his pipe in his hand, and beamed genially on Allie, showing that he had heard at least part of the remark made.

Mr. Murphy then put his pipe into his mouth and began to smoke vigorously.

"All those who vote no smoking in the cabin, please raise their hands," shouted out a voice which all soon saw came from no other than the professor.

Mr. Murphy turned and made an ugly scowl, but showed no signs of removing his pipe, — if anything, he smoked all the harder.

As no one responded to Mr. Jacobs's vote, Mr. Murphy continued to exhale the fragrant, with a great deal of

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satisfaction expressed in the quiet gleam of triumph that shone in his eye.

He was too discreet, however, to say anything, and a moment later he took his pipe out of his mouth and quitted smoking for the time being.

All things were now tight and trim, and ready for the night.

Mr. Benton sat in his rocking-chair close to the table, with his eye-glasses on his nose, reading the morning's paper, which, until this time, he had found no opportunity of looking at.

He would occasionally glance over the top of his glasses at the general proceedings about him, but would always end with a "h'm-m-m" as he resumed his reading.

For a long time no one spoke.

John, however, ventured the remark that they were at last all fairly at sea.

No one seemed to care to dispute him, or argue a fact so apparent, and the remark passed unheeded.

As it was by no means dark overhead, a suggestion from one of the boys to the effect, "let's go on deck," took like wild-fire, and the four children rushed together for the steps.

A careless movement on the part of young Freddie, jostled Jack against Mr. Murphy, which knocked his pipe out of his mouth and to the floor.

The boys disappeared up the companion-way so quickly that no one saw who did it.

Mr. Murphy stooped to pick up his pipe, and as he did so he muttered something about unmannerly young dogs, that, for some reason or other, attracted the attention and strange to say the ire of Mr. Benton, who immediately spoke up quite sharply.

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"Unmannerly young dogs, sir, is it? Unmannerly young dogs? It seems to me that if some grown persons," — here Mr. Benton laid great stress upon the word grown — "were more mannerly they would have less cause to complain of those younger than themselves."

Whether Mr. Benton referred to the fact that Mr. Murphy had resumed his smoking in the cabin, or that at that moment, in picking up his pipe, he had unconsciously stepped between Mr. Benton and the light, will remain a mystery, for the one was too much surprised to ask, as the other was, apparently, too angry for the moment to give an explanation.

Mr. Murphy's pipe not being materially damaged, he picked it up, carefully wiped it with his handkerchief, and consigned it to a small case which he replaced in his pocket.

At this moment one of the boys on deck called down for all below to come up and see the phosphorescence in the water.

Mr. Benton and Mr. Ready remained below, while the rest hastened to obey the summons.

Once on deck they could see the large dashes and sparkles of fire as it shone in the spray thrown up by the vessel's prow. Large patches, often a foot in diameter, whirled round and round in the eddying currents, and dashed by on either side. The spray was alive with starry particles, and even the long, luminous wake of the vessel shone like an immense electric sea serpent.

The professor immediately began a long explanation of the causes of various kinds of phosphorescence, and of this particular variety. He said that it was produced by the countless myriads of the young of the jelly fishes,

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that swarmed in these waters, and were known to the scientists by the name of hydroids. It was known, he said, that hydroids were young jelly fishes, and that both young and old were more or less luminous at times. That they were covered with rows of fine hair like feelers, called cilia, and that the body of the animal had the power of giving off under certain conditions, a certain gas, chemically known as carburetted hydrogen, that was luminous upon reaching the air. Some of these particles, he said, doubtless became luminous in the water to a certain degree, owing to the air which the water itself always contained.

While the professor was explaining this to those on deck, one of the boys had lowered the bucket and brought it on deck literally full of living particles of fire.

Taken to the galley, where the cook was still engaged in wiping the remains of his dirty dishes, the flare of the lamp revealed a host of tiny, gelatinous bodies, with one or two very good-sized jelly fishes.

Upon placing these in the hand and taking them to a dark corner, and then suddenly replacing them into the water, sparks of fire were given off similar to those seen so abundantly over the side of the vessel.

"Well, gentlemens," said Max, during a pause in the proceedings, "what do you want for your breakfasts?"

"Come, Max, give us some oatmeal," said Mr. Jacobs.

"Beefsteak and baked potatoes!" exclaimed Allie.

"Well, gentlemens," laughed Max, "if you had furnished a register we could have done it."

Max was a Frenchman, and though he spoke English very well, yet he often got words strangely mixed, as on this occasion.

"Refrigerator, Max," said Mr. Jacobs.

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"Yes, sir; if we had a refrigerator on board we could take with us a great many things that we could not otherwise get."

"You ought to have one," said Allie; "if only to take my beefsteak in."

"We will give you something, in the morning, that is better than beefsteak," said Max.

"Tell us what it is!" chimed in Freddie.

"You waits until the morning, young fellow, and finds out then," replied Max.

Both of the boys tried in vain to discover what it was that they were to have that was better than beefsteak.

One guessed one thing, and another another thing; but no one could tell that Max had four fine spring chickens nicely hidden away for them next day. Nor would any kind of inducements get it out of him, so the boys left off questioning.

Max continued hard at work in the galley for a long time. He made a huge pan full of nice, white bread, and set it in the corner to rise; then he made a kettle full of hasty pudding, so that it might be ready to fry in the morning. After that he put away all the dishes, washed up everywhere and everything, and, shutting the doors of the galley, with a "good nights, gentlemen; my work is done for the nights, and I'll go to bed," descended into the forecastle.

It was now quite still on deck, and, as there was no longer anything to keep them up, all returned again to the cabin, and soon after they too went to bed.

Thus ended the first day on board the *North Star*, bound for Labrador.

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CHAPTER III.

ARRIVAL AT HALIFAX.

THE morning of the third day opened fair and pleasant, but with little wind. At seven o'clock the captain hove the log, and it was found that, altogether, the vessel had made a little over three hundred miles, thus leaving about fifty miles more to be traversed before reaching Halifax.

The morning of the fourth, Freddie Benton, as usual, was the first to arise and hurry on deck. The scene that presented itself to his eyes contained such a variety of objects, and differed so materially from what he had seen when he retired at night, or rather the noon before, that at first he gazed at it in the dazed state of one who is suddenly struck sun or snow blind. But Freddie was not one to remain in such a condition long, so he rubbed his eyes, blew his nose with his handkerchief, and, rubbing his eyes again, put to the man at the wheel the very natural inquiry of:

"Say! where are we?"

The man at the wheel, who was all this time snugly sitting near the stern of the vessel, and not at the wheel at all, laughed heartily and did not reply.

"Say," shouted Freddie, "where are we?"

"In Boston, again," said the man.

"Boston," said Freddie, "how did we get there?"

"Drifted there in the night," replied the man.

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"Why! this ain't Boston!" Freddie answered.

"No; this is Newfoundland," again said the man.

"Oh! Allie! Come up here quick, we are in Newfoundland. Come, hurry up!"

A moment later and Allie, too, appeared at the head of the companion-way, and going through with the same process as his brother had, he gazed at the scene in blank amazement.

"Why, Freddie! this isn't Newfoundland, this is Halifax."

"Halifax?"

"Yes!"

"Hooray — hoo-ray! Hal-i-fax!" shouted Freddie, in his loudest tones. "Get up, all hands! Get up! We are in Hal-i-fax!"

All was in commotion in a moment. At first no one would believe it. Everybody was up, and hastening to dress themselves that they might go on shore. Mr. Murphy alone remained in his bunk, apparently undisturbed by the excitement around him.

In ten minutes after Freddie had sounded the alarm, everybody else in the cabin had shown their heads above the hatch to have a glimpse at the scene. Each party, having taken a glimpse long enough to see that there were houses near, and that it must be the veritable Halifax itself, would immediately pop below again, to make room for somebody else, and begin a most frantic flurry, preparatory to dressing, that they might get breakfast ashore.

One would really have imagined that it was Sunday, and that the party were preparing to go to church. Mr. Benton and the boys dressed themselves, — the former looked as if he were going to a very fashionable ball; the

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latter, each with their sailor's blouses, caps, and large trowsers, were really quite appropriately and comfortably attired.

Mr. Jacobs and Mr. Taylor put on their very best, and occupied the main cabin, in washing and dressing, for so long a time that Mr. Ready, and the others who were waiting for them so that all might go ashore together, grew really quite impatient. Mr. Benton, alone, ventured a slight remonstrance.

"How long do those gentlemen in the cabin intend to delay us?" said he to Mr. Ready.

"I don't know, I'm sure," replied Mr. Ready. "There's always some delay at the last moment."

"We are coming right away," shouted out Mr. Taylor from below, who had heard every word that had been said on deck.

"All right," exclaimed Mr. Ready, we are going now as soon as we can."

When the two gentlemen came on deck there was a tremendous sensation, especially among the boys. Mr. Jacobs was dressed in an elegant brown suit, and had collar and cuffs on, attached to a white shirt which shone conspicuously in front; his shoes were polished in a way that would have astounded a city bootblack; and with a large East India palm leaf hat crowning the summit of his head. Mr. Taylor was dressed in a somewhat similar manner.

Somebody whispered, very audibly, something that sounded very much like either *dude* or *dudes*, but it was difficult to tell which. Mr. Ready and Jack, with Mr. Furness, brought up the rear, and, when all had stepped into the boat, the captain and the mate got in also and rowed them ashore.

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As it was now about seven o'clock there was an hour before breakfast, so each party dispersed to enjoy themselves as they pleased until eight, when all were to meet again at the hotel, whither Mr. Ready had gone to order breakfast, and beefsteak breakfast at that, for nine, to be on the table promptly at eight.

While waiting for the expected hour to arrive Mr. Benton and the boys, in fact all the others, Mr. Ready excepted, went to the office to obtain the mail. — This was an old-fashioned governmental-looking sort of a building, of dingy stone work, and built on the slope of a hill. — The interior much resembled the exterior, and the office part was in a dark corner at the left of the entrance.

The windows were closed, when the party entered, and so they were obliged to wait a considerable time for their letters. The three boys ranged themselves on the top of a steam register and waited patiently their turn. The rest of the party, preferring to wait outside, went into the street again to stroll around and see the sights.

After about half an hour the stamp window opened, and at the same time the mail opened also. The boys got their letters and, as it was nearly eight, started off for the hotel. When they arrived there breakfast was ready and waiting. As nearly all were there, they sat down at once and began to eat.

It was a fair meal, and it was surprising to see the way the beefsteak and baked potatoes, the hot rolls and coffee, and all the other good things disappeared. The waiters were kept flying around continually bringing new supplies, and all went on as merry as possible. The waiters were extremely polite, one of them even brought Mr. Benton his coffee in a tumbler, and poured his por-

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ter into a cup. Then seeing his mistake he took them both away and even forgot to return them till Mr. Benton asked for his coffee; then it was so cold he had to get another cup and another bottle of porter, because the other by this time had lost all its foam.

At last the breakfast was finished, and all hands, the men with their cigars, went out to view the town and see whatever there was of interest to be seen.

Finding it much the cheaper way, a bus was hired, and the party went around to the citadel, and all over that; down the street to the point; back again and through the most important places until they were fairly tired, and had seen all of interest that they cared about. As this occupied nearly all of the morning, after lunch the party took the ferry and went across the bay to the other side. — About four in the afternoon they returned and wandered about the streets, visiting all the stores and places of importance, each enjoying himself hugely.

Mr. Benton and the boys then separated from the others and might have been seen in a large store that was stocked full of guns, fishing-tackle, and every kind of game appurtenance, eagerly employed in picking out fishing gear, and also powder and shot for the guns. Each of the boys got a fish pole and a reel, with a nice grass line of fifty yards, and several dozen fly hooks, besides an assortment of plain, and plain snelled hooks. Besides these Mr. Benton purchased several dozen common, cheap lines and a box of assorted hooks for all sorts of fishing. He did not get any cod lines, as the captain had informed him that there were already a number of them on board. In the shot department Mr. Benton purchased four bags of shot: one of number twelves, two of number eight, and one of a larger size of number BB for big gulls. A keg

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of powder was added to the bill; and a couple of rolls of caps, containing a thousand in each roll, of Ely's single waterproof make, were also purchased. — Then a large quantity of cut wads, a considerable number of small nicknacks and useful articles of one thing and another, among which was a patent gun cleaner, completed the list. As each of the boys had a gun, and as they were all muzzle loaders, the ammunition for one answered for all.

At length the outfit here was complete. Then Mr. Benton paid for them all, and ordered them sent on board the vessel.

By this time it was nearly dark, so all hands started for the hotel, where they were to have dinner. One by one the various members of the party straggled in until, by seven o'clock, all were present. Then came dinner. After dinner the gentlemen sat and smoked and rested, till they were aroused by Mr. Ready, who came to say that as there was a good breeze the captain thought they had better get under way and sail, unless the gentlemen wished to remain all night on shore at the hotel.

A vote being taken, strange to say, all were in favor of staying but Mr. Benton and Mr. Ready; these gentlemen argued that it was better to sail in the night, and as there was a good breeze, more would be accomplished by starting at once; the vote having been taken, however, the gentlemen very willingly gave up their wishes in the matter, and so it was agreed to remain that night in Halifax, and start early the next morning, if the wind was good. With this agreement, and the further provision that all hands be on board at eight o'clock the next morning, if the wind was fair Mr. Ready started for the vessel to let the captain know of the agreement.

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As most of the stores were closed by this time, and as all hands were very tired, one by one each sought his room, and by nine o'clock nearly everybody was in bed and asleep.

Prompt at the appointed time, the next morning, all hands were on board; a few moments later the sails were set, the anchor hove, and the *North Star*, with her canvas filled with the genial breeze that came from the southwest, gallantly bent herself to the pressure of wind and glided like a white winged gull, down the bay and out of Halifax harbor into the sea.

"Well, captain," said Mr. Taylor, coming up to the captain, who was pacing the deck just forward of the traveller; "what is our next stopping place?"

"Oh, we'll stop at Canso, I guess."

"I suppose you mean the place they call Port Mulberry, or something of the kind."

"Yes! Port Mulgrave is on one side, and Port Hawkesbury on the other."

"Is Port Mulgrave the place where we will get our letters?"

"Yes, if you told them to write to you there."

"Ah, Mr. Murphy, I am very glad to see you about once more. I hope your efforts last evening, and yesterday, were not too much for you." (Mr. Murphy had suffered considerably from seasickness.)

"Oh, no, thank you! I am very well this morning, and considerably improved. I think that I shall be able to enjoy the day, now, as well as anybody; but what are the Benton boys doing? Let us go and watch them!"

The three boys were sitting down on the hatchway before a very large box, from which they were industriously striving to remove the cover, with a screwdriver and a

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hammer. The box was about four feet long and four wide, while it was about fourteen inches deep. It was made of very hard wood, and while there were hinges upon one side of it and a couple of staples and a padlock upon the other, the whole cover had been securely fastened down by means of screws.

John, producing a key, unlocked and took off the padlock, then, when all the screws had been extracted, the cover was opened and the contents exposed.

It was, in fact, a carefully arranged box, containing the apparatus for collecting specimens of Natural History. It had been prepared for the boys by a scientific friend who had taken great interest in them, and who had given them much good advice and a great many valuable hints upon Natural History in general, and especially in collecting specimens in that branch. No one felt more the importance of this branch of science to the boys than John; and no one was more interested in the work, for the mere pleasure of it in itself, than Allie and Freddie, — though the latter knew very little about it. John had said, laughingly, that "no one knew less about bugs, shells, and that kind of truck, than Freddie," yet Freddie, when he told John that he "need not look for any more gun-wads from him," of which he had made a great many for his brother, and received much commendation — decidedly had the best of it.

"Well, boys! what are you up to now?" said Mr. Taylor, as he and Mr. Murphy approached where the boys were at work.

"Unpacking our box, sir!"

"What have you got there, and where did you get it?"

"It was put up for us by a friend at home. We do

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not yet know ourselves what is in it. Won't you stay and see us inspect it?"

"Why yes, we should like to do so very much; shouldn't we, Mr. Murphy?"

Mr. Murphy nodded his head affirmatively, and continued to smoke his pipe in silence.

"Ah! here comes Mr. Jacobs. I suppose you know that he is a professor in this very branch. He will know all about these things. If you ask him perhaps he will come and help you. Help you with good advice, if in no other way."

"Wait, Allie, and I will go and ask him," said John.

In a moment more John returned with Mr. Jacobs, who was only too glad to help the boys all that was in his power—and who entered very heartily into their schemes.

As it was a pleasant day, and not too hot, they all sat right down, where they were, and prepared to complete the work of investigating the box.

"I suppose you know what the box contains, and something about the use of these various articles, John."

"No, sir! we know very little about them. We had a few written instructions from our friend who got them for us, and I have seen a few of them used before, but we know very little about collecting in the salt-water."

"Never mind about written instructions. You'll learn more in half an hour's good solid work, than by all the instructions you can have on paper. Come! hurry off that cover, and let us see what there is in there; you have excited my curiosity."

Thus admonished, John and Allie took off the cover of the box, and began to examine the contents.

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"Now, if you will take them all out, and place them here, in order, on the hatchway, we can easily see what you have, and then we can put them back again afterwards. Ah! there comes the dredge."

The dredge was a narrow frame-work of iron, about two feet long and eight inches wide, each piece three inches deep and with the front edges lengthways, thin, sharp, and bent slightly outward so that when resting on the bottom, and drawn along by the rope, it scooped the ground like a knife, the material thus scooped going inside of the frame-work. From the middle of the side bars, were two iron arms that came together above the center of the dredge, and through a ring in each of which the dredge rope was fastened. Around the bottom of the iron frame-work were a large number of small holes, by which the netting and all the canvas of the dredge was fastened. The instrument, as John took it out, was already completed and ready for use. The net was of very fine meshes and very deep, and it was sewed to the inside of the frame-work to prevent the rough wear and tear of the handling process. On the outside of the dredge was a large, quadrangular piece of thick canvas, sewed into the same holes as was the net, on each of the longest sides of the iron, the canvas coming just beyond the bottom of the net. All of this was of course to be seen at a glance. Mr. Jacobs explained that the canvas was to prevent the net itself from being torn to pieces by being dragged on the bottom of the water over sharp stones and sharp, angular growths of nullipore, so abundant everywhere in shallow water. In a corner of the partition from which the dredge had been taken were two large leaden weights of about ten pounds each, and in another corner were three nets, one of the same size

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as that which was in the dredge which they had before them, and two of a smaller size.

"Ah!" exclaimed Mr. Jacobs. "You have two dredges here; let us find the other one."

The other one was readily found, — being the first article next in order in the box. It was of a pattern similar to that of the larger dredge, and made for use in shallow water. Its length was only fourteen inches. Beneath it were two small leads of five pounds each. This smaller dredge was also all ready for use.

"Where are your ropes?" asked Mr. Jacobs.

"I say, Freddie, won't you go into the cubby, down in the galley, and bring those two coils of new rope?"

Freddie hastened off, and soon reappeared tugging away at two huge coils of rope, which he had got as far as the deck, and which he was trying to get the rest of the way. Allie, seeing him, hastened to his help, and soon the coils were brought.

Mr. Jacobs then took the end of the larger coil, — which proved to be of fine manilla rope and about three-quarters of an inch in diameter, and fastened it to one of the rings of the dredge. He then took a piece of the smaller coil, and fastening one end of it to the other ring, tied the other end to the main rope. This, he explained, was so that should the iron be caught on a rock, the smaller rope would break before the dredge itself, thus saving the dredge in many cases where it might otherwise be lost. The weight was fastened to the rope six feet in front of the dredge, and Mr. Jacobs pronounced it all ready to be used.

Both dredges having been "rigged," and set one side, the boys turned their attention to the next article in the box. This was no other than a board resting upon two

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side pieces of wood. Upon seeing it the boys at first imagined that they had arrived at the bottom of the partition; but a second glance showed that it came out quite easily, being arranged so that the heavy dredge iron would not injure the more fragile articles beneath. These consisted of a large, oblong sieve of quite fine meshes, which the professor explained was for sifting the material brought up from the bottom, by the dredges; and a fine large dip net, with a long, jointed handle. These latter articles were all packed in carefully with cloth, which, upon inspection, proved to be what is commonly known as strainer cloth, and which, Mr. Jacobs said, was for doing specimens up in previously to placing them in alcohol.

The middle partition of the box contained three large copper cans, with large inside mouths, fastened by screws, filled with alcohol for preserving fishes, crustaceas, and other large marine animals. One of the cans was double the size of the other two, and had the mark eight upon it; the others were each marked four, and contained eight and four gallons of alcohol apiece.

The third partition of the box was next examined. It contained about a dozen jars, four quart and eight two-quart jars, all filled with alcohol ready for use. They had the top or mouth of the jar of the same dimensions as the bottom, and were, so Mr. Jacobs told the boys, what were called butter jars. Then there were two large two-quart common preserving cans, and four small quarts of the same make.

In the farther corner of the box were two boxes placed one above the other. — One of these contained a variety of two, four, six, and eight ounce bottles, with large

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mouths and corks, for collecting smaller specimens. The other box had a small partition in it, dividing the box into halves, one half containing small homœopathic vials of all sizes, and the other an assortment of pill boxes; two of which, being marked upon the outside, were found to contain a quantity of tags, made of stout cardboard with strings on them, which might be used for labeling specimens with. A third box, much larger than the others, contained parchment labels, for a similar purpose. In one corner of the box was a ball of fine, stout, red twine for doing up bundles and tying around specimens done up in the cloth before being put into the cans or bottles.

"Well!" said the professor, when the inspection was completed, "your friend certainly understood how to fit you out for work on sea animals."

"I should say so!" exclaimed John and Allie in the same breath.

"It is funny," said John, "he did not know about it until a few days before we sailed, and then the box did not arrive until a short time before we started."

"Yes!" cried Freddie. "Don't you remember, Allie, that the box came in the same wagon that Mr. Jacobs and the trunks came on."

Just as Mr. Jacobs performed the very unprofessor-like act of turning to Mr. Taylor and winking very hard, Freddie's eye caught him in the act.

"Oh, John!" cried Freddie, "Mr. Jacobs knows all about it; see, he is winking to Mr. Taylor, and I believe he and Mr. Chalmers" (Mr. Chalmers being the scientific friend who had helped the boys in their work) "knew all about it, long ago!"

"Yes! I'm sure they must have," said Allie. "He

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don't deny it! See him wink at Mr. Taylor! I don't care, I think you are awfully good," said Allie.

"Thank you for your good opinion, my boy," Mr. Jacobs replied. "I'll do all I can to keep you busy this trip. I don't think you'll have much time to be idle; but let me see the net!"

Mr. Jacobs then took the net, screwed together the handle, which was of five joints, each piece with a nice brass ferule and screw, and then the brass ring of the net.

"There! that is as fine a net as you can get anywhere. We got that at Bradford & Anthony's," said Mr. Jacobs. "Ah-a- I mean it is as good a one as any that you could get at Bradford & Anthony's," Mr. Jacobs observed, correcting himself.

None of the boys noticed the remark, but Mr. Taylor winked with the professor at the blunder, and Mr. Murphy began to laugh so hard that everybody looked up in surprise to see what was the matter; while Mr. Murphy was obliged to cough very hard, and then to put his pipe into his mouth and smoke vigorously for some time before he could regain his equanimity.

"Now, Allie," said Mr. Jacobs, "go to Max and borrow a pail; a large wooden one, if you can get it. Tell him that you are only going to put sea water and seaweeds and that like into it."

Allie was off in a moment, and soon returned with the pail.

"That's all right. Now fill it with water from the draw bucket."

Allie did as he was told, and soon had the pail full of fresh, clean sea water. Meanwhile Mr. Jacobs had been leaning over the side of the vessel, intently watching the

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water and the several small particles of seaweed that were continually passing. Presently he made a lunge, and captured a large, tangled mass of weed that came passing by. This he quickly transferred to the pail, and, with the precaution to the boys of "don't touch it yet," proceeded to capture several more smaller pieces, and finally another large mass of weeds which, with that already taken, nearly filled the pail.

"Now, boys," said the professor, "let's see what we have got."

All hands crowded about the pail, while Freddie was dispatched for two tin basins from the cook, and the professor began to pick over the seaweed in the pail. While they were thus occupied Jack Ready took the draw bucket and filling it with water, watched his chances, and soon had a second pailful of seaweed.

"That's good," said the professor, "keep us supplied with it."

Just then Jack saw a great mass of weed approaching, so he ran and got a great tub, which was standing near the galley, and began filling that. Netful after netful came up, and soon Jack had this heaping to the top with weed.

"Let us stop," said the professor, "and get all we can, assort it, and then see what we have got."

To do this, the weeds in the water pail were emptied into the tub, as were those in the bucket also, and the pail filled with fresh water. Then the seaweed was taken, piece by piece, and shaken into the water, to free it from any small animals that might be on it, and afterwards looked over carefully for anything that might be adhering to it. In this way the water pail was soon fairly alive with all sorts of small crustaceans, water

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fleas, small fishes that had become entangled in the masses, many species of very pretty shells, and not a few very delicate and pretty seaweeds. The professor, also, laid aside a number of immense clusters of barnacles, and also several pieces of board with curiously shaped conical pieces of shell-like formation upon them, which the professor said were also barnacles, but of a different species.

Still the fishing went on. The tub was filled with weed and emptied a number of times. The boys were kept busy nearly all the morning, and by noon two large pails were filled with all sort and variety of animal life. A third pail contained several jelly fishes, and smaller animals of a similar kind that had been captured by the net; and thus, by dinner time, the boys had three pails full of material for a fine study of sea life, which the professor readily agreed to help them to look over and examine, as well as to bottle, in the afternoon.

It was with some difficulty that the boys could be persuaded to leave their work even long enough for dinner. Max was obliged to shout to them several times that dinner was ready, before they seemed to be aware that he was speaking to them or even that he was speaking at all. The cry of fresh roast mutton had no attractions, and the addition of plum pudding and molasses was entirely unheeded. At length the case became so desperate that Max was obliged to threaten them with the entire loss of their dinner if they did not come at once.

"I will give you just five minutes more to get your dinner in, boys; and if you are not here in that time, you gets no dinner to-day," said Max, somewhat vexed at the delay.

The last words, "no dinner to-day," were too much to

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be resisted, and soon the boys were as interested in discussing the merits of roast mutton and plum pudding, as they had been a few moments before of sea animals and jelly fish.

After dinner the boys and Mr. Jacobs gathered around the pails again, and began to work over their specimens.

"What are these great long-necked, funny looking white things?" asked Allie, taking up a large bunch of seaweed, from which hung some thirty or forty objects of different sizes, with long stems of necks, and large triangular shaped heads.

"Those are barnacles. They are animals that live in the salt water in the way you see them here, and are of the variety known as goosenecks, on account of their long stems and peculiar bird-like heads. They were known in Europe in very early times, and there is an old story," continued Mr. Jacobs, "that they grew on trees, and that the inside, where you see the animal and fringed feet, was the young of the goose. The people believed that the young goose was hatched from these plants, and that they then fell off into the water, where they lived and grew to be full-grown geese, when they flew away in flocks. This story was believed by well-informed and even prominent men in different parts of the world for a long time."

"Yes, but did you not call these barnacles?" asked Freddie, taking up one of the boards with the shell-like cones upon it. "They are not the same!"

"No, those that you have in your hand are a different species from the long-necked ones. They are also of a different genus. The one has a hard shell-like covering of lime, while the other has nothing except what we call a naked covering. They both grow in large colonies of

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single animals, however. The long-necked species grows as you see it, and is not nearly as often found as the other, which grows almost everywhere, on rocks, boards, or anywhere it can find a place to fasten itself upon. You will often, at the seashore, see the rocks along the beach covered with this shell-like variety for miles; in fact, they are always more or less common on any sea beach, while the others are generally found attached to floating objects, a distance from land, at sea."

"How many species of barnacles are there, Mr. Jacobs?" asked Allie.

"Oh! there are a great many. Nearly every country has several varieties. There are about our New England coast and its adjacent waters some three or four species only, but a great many rare forms have been found, and some of them in a very curious way," continued Mr. Jacobs.

"Do tell us about them, sir," urged John.

"I am afraid you have not reached that point in your education," laughed Mr. Jacobs, "where you will appreciate, without the specimens, or fully understand the connection; but," he added, "there are several other species that have been taken on the coast, that are common in warmer climates. Some that came here on the bottom of ships from tropical seas, where they had fastened themselves to the vessels. Some have been found living in rivers, miles from the sea; others have been dredged from the bottom of the water, many fathoms in depth. One curious species has been found attached to the sides or bellies of whales. These, as the kinds found on ships' bottoms, may live here or may not. It cannot be told yet for a certainty. The objects to which they are attached being living or moving, and able to readily

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go from one sea to another, or one climate to another, it would be difficult to say whether they lived here in any other situations or not."

"But are there no more than three or four kinds of these curious animals that are at all common on our coast?" continued John.

"That is about all of this half mollusk and half crab."

"What are mollusks?" asked Freddie.

"Mollusks?" said Mr. Jacobs. "Why, they are the animals of one of the great classes into which all animals of the animal kingdom are divided. They are what you often call shell-fish, with a great many other kinds that you probably never either saw or heard of."

"And are the crabs mollusks?" said Allie.

"No, they belong to the old group of what we used to call articulates."

"Well, then," put in Freddie, "how can they be half mollusks and half articulates? Do they connect the two groups, or are there others like them that make another group, as you call it?"

"Now you are getting into the fine points," laughed Mr. Jacobs. "You would have your hands full if you should attempt to follow the matter out: for the present it is enough to know that the barnacle belongs to the class of the cirripedia, which is a division of the articulates; thus the animals come nearer to the crabs, of which they are really a relation, than to the mollusks."

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed John, "why can't we understand all about these things now!"

"You are not the only person who has ever made a similar wish; but let us put these two fine bunches into one of the jars."

Mr. Jacobs then took a small piece of cloth, placed the

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bunches carefully in it, wrote a label upon one of the pieces of parchment, which he inclosed in the package also, and carefully did the package up and tied it with a piece of the red string. Then he fastened a small tag to the outside of the parcel, and placing a number upon it, dropped it into one of the two-quart jars. Then he took a small note book, that one of the boys procured from his trunk, and copied the number and label into it.

Having shown the boys how to work, Mr. Jacobs now left them to attend to some work of his own. The boys then proceeded to arrange the specimens that they had caught into similar bundles, all of which were done up carefully, and labeled fully, before being thrown into the alcohol. Having found something to occupy their attention, all the rest of the afternoon was occupied in a way similar to that of the morning. Tubful after tubful of seaweed was taken and examined. Several large schools of very small fishes, which Mr. Jacobs told them were of the genus called stickleback, were found, and quite a number of other interesting things were taken. One jar was devoted to the small and curious seaweeds which came into the net, many of which were exceedingly delicate, and of these there seemed to be a number of distinct varieties. All were carefully preserved.

By night the boys had three two-quart jars full to the very top of fishes, shells, and a large assortment of various sea animals. These they intended to take home and assort, and study at their leisure. John was especially interested in the large numbers of fleas and water lice, with a few worms that had been found. In fact, the whole find was in every respect satisfactory to all parties, and Mr. Jacobs praised the boys highly for their indus-

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try, and the boys were themselves no less pleased at the results of their work.

"Oh, Mr. Jacobs," said Allie, "I think it is really too bad that you cannot live with us all the time, and teach us about these things. Father is awful rich, you know, and we could go where we liked and do whatever you said, and have things fixed up to suit us, and, oh! how pleasant it would be."

Mr. Jacobs looked at the boy for a moment, and smiled sadly as he turned away, only to encounter Mr. Benton's eyes, who had been standing near him, unperceived, and had heard the whole of his son's remark.

"Smart boys, Mr. Jacobs!" said Mr. Benton.

"Yes, sir! They are young yet, sir!"

Mr. Benton appeared not to notice the remark, for he turned, a moment after, and retired to the cabin.

As it was now getting dark, the boys put away their things, and shut and locked their box for the night.

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CHAPTER IV.

HOW A REVOLVER CAUSED IMMENSE COMMOTION.

TEN days out. The *North Star* lay almost motionless upon the bosom of a mirrored patch of water in the center of the mighty and usually tempestuous Gulf of St. Lawrence.

But to our story.

Among the crew of the *North Star* was a small cabin boy. He was a greenhorn, having been taken on board for the first time, on the beginning of this trip. He was familiarly called Tod, though his real name was no other than Thomas Thompson. How either the first or the last part of his name, or both together, in any way were converted into Tod, is a mystery. Possibly he was fond of the article for which Tod might be an abbreviation; possibly it might have been a contraction of toad, — for he certainly was as ugly-looking as one of those animals. However it came about, this young, green, awkward, homely, uncertain, if not positively disagreeable and dishonest individual, had been taken on board to assist the cook. Max had become disgusted with him the first day out, and he had been consigned to the forecastle to do sailor's duty as a green hand.

It did not seem to make the slightest difference with Tod as to what people said to him or did with him. He was the same ugly, uncomfortable looking darky that he appeared the first hour he came aboard. He was always

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about and in everybody's way, or he sulked, and remained hidden in the forecastle among the boxes and barrels for days at a time. No one seemed to have any influence with him, and even the captain and crew let him as thoroughly alone as it was in their power to do.

Tod was, in fact, as thorough a young imp of darkness as it was possible to make one; yet, strange to say, Tod could be as pleasant and agreeable — nay, affable — as he could be disagreeable and ugly.

One morning, quite early, all hands were below asleep, and the captain himself had the wheel. While his back was turned for a moment, looking at the log, which he had just hauled in, he heard a step, then a sound of some one running or walking fast yet cautiously behind him. As he turned he caught sight of Tod just retreating behind the galley.

"Here, you young black sculpin, what are you doing? Where have you been?"

Tod was by this time so far away that he either had not heard the captain call to him, or, if he did, had, for motives of his own, deemed it best to get out of the way as quickly as possible. It was, however, true that a moment after the captain had called him Tod had disappeared, and in another moment both Tod and the circumstance of his curious appearance and disappearance had passed from his mind.

An hour later and Fred and Allie were leaning over the bow of the vessel watching the motionless water, and the boundless glassy surface of the sea that spread in every direction.

Suddenly, —

"Good morning, boys."

Both boys turned instantly, and encountered the

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round, good-humored face of Mr. Murphy, with his ever-present meerschaum in his mouth, intently watching them.

"Good morning, sir!" exclaimed Allie. "We were watching the water. I think it is perfectly grand. How I wish that Eva and May could be here and see it!"

"And mamma, too," chimed in Freddie.

"Yes, indeed, mamma and all; how they would enjoy it, sir!" said Allie.

"Indeed they would, my boys. You must write them all about it, and send the letters at Halifax."

"Oh, yes, sir, we mean to. John is writing a journal for mamma, Allie for May, and I am writing for Eva."

"Yes! and Mr. Murphy, the best of it all is that neither of us are going to tell the other what he is writing about, so that they will all be different. Won't that be fine?"

"A capital plan, boys; whose idea was that?"

"Oh, that was Eva's," said Freddie. "She made us promise to do it before we came away. John and Allie have their journal all written up, but I haven't had time to touch mine yet; but I guess I'll make it up, somehow."

Freddie gave a deep sigh, as he said this, as though the idea was almost too much for him.

Mr. Murphy smiled as he turned and began to pace the deck, at the same moment Mr. Benton's head, then his shoulders, and finally his full form, appeared above the companion-way. Mr. Benton allowed his eyes to roam over the scene about him, and, meeting everywhere with boundless sea, fixed them upon Mr. Murphy. For a moment a scowl clouded Mr. Benton's brow, then, as

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if the situation gleamed upon his troubled senses, he exclaimed:

"H'm-m-m, ah — a — a, good day, sir, good day, sir! fine morning, fine morning."

"Ah! good morning, sir," said Mr. Murphy. "I hope you rested well last night, sir."

"As well as could be expected, under the circumstances, sir," replied Mr. Benton, "though I did not get to sleep for some time, sir, owing to the fact that the light in the cabin was kept burning until the most outrageous hour of several minutes after ten o'clock, sir."

This was a home thrust at Mr. Murphy, who had sat up until nearly half-past ten o'clock, reading Cooper's "Red Rover," when Mr. Ready had said that the lights must be out at ten o'clock.

Both gentlemen scowled at each other ominously, for a moment. What the result might have been no one could have told, had not Max's cherry voice ended all seeming hostility, for the present, at least, by its:

"Breakfast, gentlemens! all ready."

After the others had all finished, Max himself sat down to a large plateful of beefsteak, which he finished in grand style. Then, while the crew were eating in the forecastle, he took out his pipe and prepared for a smoke. Jack Ready came along just then, and broke in:

"Having a breathing spell, cook?"

"Yes! I must take a few minutes as well as you. You have your time all the time. I must have mine some of the time. I can't work always."

"You do more work than any of the rest of us."

"I guess I do as much as any of you!"

Just at that moment voices were heard in loud alter-

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cation, and Allie Benton was seen to step forward and point at Jack Ready.

"He's the one that took it. I saw him in your stateroom, this morning, when there was no one in the cabin but me, and when he heard me make a noise in my room he hurried off and went on deck."

Hearing the noise, both Jack and the cook came out of the galley to see what it was all about. As Jack appeared, Allie stepped up to him and said:

"See here, Jack Ready, you give my brother Freddie back his revolver."

Jack looked wicked for a minute, and was about to make an angry reply, but, seeing his father coming along, he simply said:

"I haven't got Fred's revolver. I did not know he had one."

"Yes you did, and you took it; you just give it back," returned Allie, now flushed.

"I tell you I haven't got it. I didn't know he had one."

"What were you doing in Fred's stateroom this morning?"

"I wasn't in Fred's stateroom this morning."

"I thought you would deny it. I was in my room and there was no one else in the cabin, and you came down. Then you stood in this room for a moment and finally went into Fred's room, and I heard you in there turning things around and stepping around, as if you were looking at the things in there. Just then I coughed, and you put something you had in your hand down in a hurry and stepped out softly and then went up the stairs on deck. A few moments afterward, Freddie came down for his revolver, that he had left, right out in plain sight, on his shelf, and he couldn't find it. He looked every-

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where, but it was gone. Now, you must have taken it."

"I say I didn't take it. I did go into the cabin this morning, but I didn't go into anybody's room. I was in the wash-room."

"I don't believe it."

"What's the trouble, boys? What's the trouble?" said Mr. Ready, who just then came up to the crowd.

"He's accused me of stealing, father," said Jack, pointing to Allie Benton.

"Accused you of stealing, my boy? Well, *I* never knew you to steal so much as a penny, for seventeen years; I believe you are seventeen years old next Friday."

"He says that I stole his brother Fred's revolver."

"And you did, and you better give it back," said Allie.

"There! you hear him, father?"

"Hold on, now; steady. We'll have this thing looked into. If he has, he shall give it back again and take the consequences. If he hain't he shan't be accused unjustly. I won't say that I have before known persons to take things and lay it off on other people, but," said Mr. Ready, "I will say," here Mr. Ready's face flushed, "I've known such things to occur."

"Do you mean to imply that I'd steal my brother's revolver, and then lie about it, and lay it off on somebody else?"

"Who says you have been lying?" said Mr. Benton, who just then came along, and heard only the last words.

"Nobody has said so, but I want my pistol," chimed in Freddie, for the first time.

"Here comes Mr. Jacobs," said John, who had hitherto stood by, but said nothing. "Oh, Mr. Jacobs, will you act as judge?"

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"Act as judge? What for?"

"Courtmartial, Mr. Jacobs!" exclaimed Mr. Ready; "we want a courtmartial, and we want you to act as judge. We are, all of us, thieves, robbers, liars, and villains; and we mean to institute a courtmartial, and try all hands. You are to be the judge, Mr. Murphy and Mr. Furness the lawyers on either side. All the others are more or less interested parties and shall act as witnesses and spectators."

Mr. Jacobs entered into the scheme with much interest, as did Mr. Murphy and Mr. Furness.

Mr. Murphy was to act as lawyer for Mr. and Jack Ready, — as Mr. Benton would not let him act for his boys; while Mr. Furness acted for the boys, Allie and Fred. John and Mr. Benton were spectators. The only witnesses, outside of the parties, were the captain and one of the sailors, who saw Jack go into the cabin and come out again.

When everybody was ready, all hands went into the cabin to prepare for the trial.

After talking the matter over, outside with Mr. Murphy and Mr. Furness, Mr. Jacobs sat and pondered for a long time. Finally he spoke:

"I don't see, Mr. Furness, how this matter is coming out exactly."

"It seems a curiously mixed up affair," replied the latter.

"It does, indeed. I cannot well doubt Mr. Ready's assertion about his son, and Jack says so positively, and with such an appearance of sincerity, that he not only did not take the revolver, but that he did not know that any of the boys had one, that it makes, virtually, a case of circumstantial evidence, alone, of the word of one

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against the word of the other. I hardly see my way clear, as to how to proceed in the matter."

"If you will allow me a word, Mr. Jacobs," said Mr. Murphy, who possibly spoke with a slight air of a possible coming triumph over his adversary expressed in his eyes, "it seems to me to be a question of veracity between the two boys, as far as I can judge, if, as Allie says, he *saw* young Ready in the cabin. Now, I do not wish to seem too hasty in a matter of such real importance," he added by way of apology, as if he felt that he might possibly have appeared too eager in the matter, "but I must do the best for *my* client, that I can," he added in a half-subdued tone, as if talking to himself.

"Well," said Mr. Jacobs, "I shall try to act strictly on the merits of the case at any rate."

Upon this they descended into the cabin, and took seats with the rest.

Mr. Jacobs then called all to order, and made a brief speech, in which he set forth the case as well as he was able, and ended by hoping that all would tell the whole truth the same as if they were in a regular court, so that the innocent might not suffer for the guilty, and that, if possible, the missing article might be found and restored to its owner. The witnesses were then called.

The first was Freddie Benton. He testified to having taken the revolver out of the bag and, having cleaned it nicely, placed it on the shelf of his cabin, where he kept his brush and comb, and a variety of useful articles, ready for use whenever they might be wanted. This, he said, he had done the night before, when he took out his other articles and placed them upon the same shelf. — He said that the revolver was one of the Smith and

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Wesson make, a seven shooter, 22 calibre, and about four inch barrel. It had a rosewood handle, and was painted blue-black. Fred also said that when he got up in the morning he found the revolver gone.

Mr. Furness then cross-questioned him very carefully, and for a long time, though very little new was brought out, it appeared that Mr. Furness had several ideas in his head that, by the twinkling of his small grayish eyes, he evidently intended to make use of later.

Allie Benton was then called.

He testified that he was in his stateroom about half-past six in the morning, and that no one else was there besides him. That soon after he had heard somebody come down into the cabin, and, looking through a crack in the door he had seen Jack Ready, standing in the middle of the cabin and apparently looking around him to see if anybody else was there. A few moments afterwards he heard him rummaging among things in the wash-room, and that he seemed to be taking up things and putting them down again. That he, Allie, had stifled a cough, and that immediately the rattling of things stopped, and through the same crack he saw Jack going up the companion-way. Soon after that Freddie had come down for his revolver and could not find it. Such was the substance of Allie's evidence.

Next the captain and mate were called. The captain testified that he had seen Jack enter the cabin, and come out of it again with something in his hand that he hastened to thrust into his pocket when he saw him, the captain, looking at him.

But the worst of the testimony was yet to come. The mate being called, said that that morning he had seen Jack open his trunk and take out and put in a revolver,

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that, as much as he could see of it, resembled exactly the description of the one said to have been taken.

Here was indeed some important testimony. Every one looked aghast. The more so, as no cross-questioning could change a single statement of the mate's. Even Mr. Murphy's twinkling eyes grew solemn. Mr. Furness alone seemed indifferent, but, as a cool lawyer, seemed to say, "Very good, it only proves my case."

The defense now came to the stand. — Jack Ready seemed to understand that the case was against him, and that very little that he could say would have any effect. He told his story, however, in a confident way, and maintained to the last his innocence. He said that he went down into the cabin, and, as the vessel rolled somewhat, he stood there for a few moments to get his balance, and had then gone to the wash-room for his father to see if he had left his hair-brush. He found the hair-brush, put it in his pocket, and returned it to his father.

Mr. Ready testified to the fact of sending Jack for the brush, and of his returning with it. This was all that could be said for the defense.

Had it not been for the testimony of the mate, the case would have stood in favor of Jack; since the other side had presented nothing but the circumstantial evidence of the boys and the captain against the real evidence of Mr. Ready and his son.

Now there was another side to the case that as yet had not appeared. The sharp eyes of Mr. Furness had detected what for a moment everybody else had forgotten, and a word from him caused everybody to start.

"Mr. Judge," said Mr. Furness, "the statement of the mate, to my mind, leaves no room for hesitation in insti-

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tuting a search warrant for this revolver in Jack Ready's trunk. I will myself, in company with Mr. Murphy, proceed to perform this unpleasant duty, if your judgeship shall grant the required permission."

"Very good, sir!" said Mr. Jacobs. — "I appoint Mr. Murphy and Mr. Furness a committee of two to search Mr. Ready's trunk; and send Mr. Ready himself, with them to assist in the search. Please retire, gentlemen, and return as soon as you can."

If a sensation had been made by the statement of the mate, a still greater one was aroused by the return of the search party. Mr. Murphy was leading or rather holding Jack by the arm, while Mr. Furness, very sober indeed, held in his hands a revolver which, upon seeing, Freddie instantly claimed to be his. To say that surprise and amazement was upon every face, would be putting it mild indeed. — Even Mr. Murphy and Mr. Ready were appalled. Jack alone maintained a perfectly straight-forward countenance, though there was a red spot in the center of both of his cheeks.

"Gentlemen!" said Mr. Furness, "this thing has got to be more serious than was even for a moment anticipated by any of us, I believe. Once more I call upon Mr. Jack Ready to explain what this all means. A free and frank confession now will save a great deal of trouble."

"I can only say, sir, as I have said before, I did *not* take his revolver. I did not even know that he had one. The one you found in my trunk is mine. I brought it from home and have had it a long time. My brother could prove what I say if he was here, and it has his initial F. for Fred, marked with a pin point on the handle."

Sure enough, turning the revolver over, the letter F.

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appeared scratched on the nickled piece at the butt of the handle.

"This is very strange," said Mr. Jacobs; "the strangest case that I ever knew. — I hope that some one of our lawyers will be able to clear up the mystery."

"Your honor," said Mr. Murphy, rising, "I see that the mark on the butt of the revolver is an old one. I make a scratch like this," suiting the action to the word, "and it leaves a fresh, clean mark; the letter F. here traced is old, worn, and quite dingy. It would have been impossible to have made it this morning, as its freshness would be evidence. As you will all admit, this is a point in our favor. You will also see that the handle of this revolver is rubbed and worn, as is also the barrel, while the one lost was new. — We also find in this young man's trunk five boxes of cartridges. Here is one of them. I would ask my opponent to produce a box of those used in the revolver belonging to young Benton, that we may compare them. There may be a difference in the labels."

Mr. Furness then spoke to Freddie Benton, who left the circle, and, going to his stateroom, soon returned from it with a box of cartridges which he handed to Mr. Furness who, in turn, passed it across the table to Mr. Murphy, who took it and for a few moments studied the labels on each box. He then turned to Mr. Jacobs and said:

"Now, sir, I see by these labels, as you all can see for yourselves, that they are of two different kinds and made by two different firms. All of the boxes in Mr. Ready's trunk are of the same kind as the one I hold in my hand, and young Benton can tell us how many boxes of cartridges he brought with him, and if they were all of the kind he handed us, and that I hold in my hand."

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"You can answer this question, Freddie, if you will," said Mr. Furness.

"Oh, yes, sir!" exclaimed Freddie. "They were all the same, and we brought down twenty boxes."

A smile went around the group, at this burst of youthful enthusiasm, but it calmed down the next minute as Mr. Murphy continued:

"You will then see, for my second point, that there *may* be two revolvers on board, as there are two kinds, and two separate packs, of cartridges. My client has a set of cartridges of his own, distinct from those of his accuser; and why may he not have a revolver of his own, also? I think, for my first point, I have shown, without any doubt, that he has, and that this, as he says, and as I have shown, is, in reality, what he has said it was, his own private property. It is clear, then, that the lost revolver has not been found. What has my brother, Mr. Furness, to say on *his* side?"

"Gentlemen!" said Mr. Furness, "though we have settled one point, is not our evidence, circumstantial though it be, still stronger against the prisoner? We may say that this is his own property, but can we let him off from the whole charge simply upon this lack of evidence? We cannot say that he took the revolver, nor can we tell the motive that might have induced him, even having one of his own, so very similar, to possess another one; yet will the facts just presented justify us in clearing him entirely of such a charge, with such strong circumstantial evidence against him? I think not, sir; and shall ask for time for still further inquiry into this matter."

After Mr. Furness had spoken, Mr. Jacobs arose, and said: "Gentlemen, I thank the brothers for their care-

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ful conduct of this, I confess, very trying and curious case. In all my connection with the courts, — which has been but very little, by the way" — here the judge smiled somewhat at the assembled people — "I have not met with such a strange assembly of facts and apparent, if not real, contradictions. I confess myself incompetent to rightly decide upon a question that has developed so many really personal points. It seems clear to my mind that as yet we are not upon the right scent, so to speak, and that we have not found the true solution to this most puzzling question yet. Since you have decided unanimously to leave the decision of this matter with me, and agreed to abide by my decision, I will decide this: Mr. Ready has been found to possess a revolver which Master Freddie Benton claimed to be his. The evidence proves conclusively that the weapon is the private and exclusive property of Mr. Jack Ready, and not the missing article of Master Freddie, whose youthful enthusiasm has, in this case, evidently, carried him too far. I will, therefore, declare Mr. Jack Ready as 'not guilty' in this particular direction."

A loud sound of applause, from both sides, told that they were equally satisfied with the verdict rendered. After quiet was resumed, Mr. Jacobs continued:

"It does not seem to me that Mr. Jack Ready has perfectly vindicated himself until the revolver has been found. I do not believe that, in reality, anybody, after this, is willing to believe him wilfully guilty of theft, with concealment. We will, therefore, let the whole affair drop, simply urging everybody, and especially Jack himself, to do all in their power to find and restore the missing article. Everybody, even Mr. Jack himself, will see that he must of necessity rest under a certain

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cloud, even with this vindication of his character, until the lost revolver is returned. Thus deciding the case, I do herewith adjourn this court."

"Three cheers for the judge," shouted Allie, stepping forward.

They were given with a will.

"Now, Jack," said Allie, stepping up to Jack, who had remained in the corner for the last hour in perfect silence, "forgive me, for saying what I did, for I now do not believe you took it; do we, Freddie?

"No, Jack; we do not," responded Freddie, "and I move that we take a vote." Freddie then raised his voice and exclaimed loudly: "All those who really believe Jack Ready guilty of taking my revolver please raise their hands!" Silence ensued for a moment, during which time not a hand was raised. "All those who believe him not guilty please raise their hands." Every hand went up in a moment, and the boys themselves even raised both their hands.

"Is there anybody opposed to an unanimous vote?" said Mr. Ready.

"No! No!" came from all hands.

At this moment Jack stepped up, and said, "I thank you all very much for the good opinion of me. I did not take the revolver, and I will do all in my power to discover where the article is."

Mr. Murphy, at this, went right up to Jack, and fairly hugged him, from mere joy. Jack needed all the sympathy he could get. The two red spots had spread themselves all over his face, and one could see that he had been crying, during the time that he had been waiting in the corner for the result of the trial.

At this moment a clear, pleasant, youthful voice, that

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everybody recognized at once as that of Freddie Benton's, was heard on the deck, singing:

> "The sun will be shining to-morrow,
> Although it be cloudy to-day."

It was an old song, but it came in so well, and seemed such a pleasant ending to the scenes of the day, that the sunshine seemed already to have penetrated everybody, and set all in harmony with the youthful singer. The smile went around. It broadened into a laugh, and before anybody seemed to realize it, all were merry once more; and the trial was, for the time at least, entirely forgotten.

Troubles seldom come singly. We are no sooner out of one than we are into another. The monotony as well as the pleasures of life are constantly interrupted by events which cause us more or less trouble. The dwellers in the *North Star*, thus happily relieved from one trouble, had little time in which to congratulate themselves, before a new and unexpected interruption threatened to disturb the harmony of the scene.

In the midst of the quiet succeeding the events just recorded, those on deck were suddenly alarmed by a sound resembling that of a gun, apparently issuing from the hold of the vessel, and beneath the feet of those who were on deck. A moment later, and a small black form was seen issuing from the forecastle, shouting at the top of its voice, and wildly gesticulating as it reached the main deck of the vessel. It was no other than the form of Tod.

When Tod reached the deck, he stood still for a moment, gazing about him vacantly; but only for a moment. Then, as if gathering himself together, he

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made one frantic plunge, and landed in a heap in the corner between the galley, the foremast, and the traveler of the fore staysail. At the same time he threw up both of his hands and began to scream in a most lusty manner.

A black man or boy can, at any time, use his voice with the power of several ordinary white men of his own size. Tod proved, on this particular occasion, no exception to this rule. Scream followed scream in quick succession.

Max, the cook, was the first upon the scene, and Mr. Ready — ever ready, as his name implied — was second to him.

"What's the matter?" cried Mr. Ready.

"What's the matter now?" chimed in Max.

No response; while a pair of black hands beat wildly the air; while the darky himself made no attempt either to arise or to leave off his cries.

The cook and Mr. Ready easily picked Tod up, and after some difficulty, got him to sit upon one of the stools, of which a number were lying about the deck. It was then, only, that they perceived that his left hand was covered with blood, and that the forefinger had been cut or shot off, near the palm of the hand, and was hanging by a mere thread to its socket, while blood was pouring down everywhere on his shirt and trowsers.

Max rushed off immediately for a basin of water; Jack Ready was dispatched for a sponge, and some rags for bandages, from Mr. Ready's trunk; and Mr. Jacobs hastened for a box of salve with which to dress the wound.

These were all brought, and the nimble fingers of Mr. Jacobs were soon at work washing the wound.

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After all the blood had been removed from Tod's face and hands, and the finger itself attended to, Mr. Jacobs replaced the finger, which was not so badly cut into as it had at first appeared, and sewed it on again with a few stitches from a needle and thread, that had been prepared and handed him by Mr. Ready, and the wound covered over with the salve. Then he wound a rag carefully over the finger, taking care to place some lint over the salve, and secured the cloth by winding it over the hand and around the wrist.

Tod had cried pitifully most of the time that the operation was being performed. He had howled at first; but, finding himself — for the first time in his life perhaps — in the hands of men and gently instead of rudely handled, he had quieted down amazingly under the skillful treatment and soothing influence of his acting physician — Mr. Jacobs.

After the howling had finished, the crying had in a measure ceased, and the hand bandaged to the satisfaction of both parties, Tod was brought forward and placed in one of the easy chairs belonging to some of the parties, when he was cautioned to stay still, and not to use or even stir his hand under any emergency whatever. In order to make the charge still more effective, to the great surprise of Tod himself, as well as everybody else, Mr. Ready was soon seen making his way from the galley, with a huge piece of bread and butter, with a slight tinge of molasses upon it, straight for him.

Tod's eyes widened perceptibly as he saw the feast approaching. At first he evidently doubted his senses, which told him that it was for him, and Mr. Ready had to repeat, rather testily it seemed, for the third time, "Come, take it, won't you? hurry up."

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Whether it was the somewhat rough tone, which had in it the sort of a command that he had been in the habit of hearing used to him, that started Tod, or whether it was the tempting bait that was too much for him to longer withstand, is hard to tell; but with a grand, convulsive clutch, Tod seized the slice, and, presently, all else was oblivion to him.

The next thing to do, after seeing the finger attended to, was to find out the particulars of this strange occurrence.

Mr. Ready and Mr. Jacobs descended into the forecastle and made a careful examination there of every part of the hold, but could find nothing there save smoke, but there was plenty of that.

Through the confined nature of the hold, the smoke was retained a much longer time than it would otherwise have been. None of the crew had been in the forecastle at the time of the explosion or firing, whichever it were best to call it, and therefore no one could explain fully the affair, but Tod himself.

Coming on deck again Mr. Ready and Jack took off the hatch, and immediately a dense volume of smoke issued from below.

The thought that there must be fire in the hold again sent down Mr. Ready, who, with Jack, carefully examined every nook and corner, but could find nothing but smoke, apparently from some pistol or gun.

Coming on deck again Mr. Ready approached Tod, and said, as gently as he could:

"Well, my boy, what were you doing? How did it all happen? Tell me all about it!"

Tod, seeing Mr. Ready approach, had begun a most comical mixture of a howl and a cry. In moving he had

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given his hand a hit upon the arm of the chair, that had produced the latter; while the sight of a huge billet of wood, that Mr. Ready held unconsciously in his hand, and which he had taken up with the intention of passing to the cook, had induced the former.

Quiet having been restored, the question was again put.

"Tell us now, my boy, how it all happened."

The only answer was a blank silence, while the eyes of the boy were lowered, and his face seemed to express an ominous sulk: ominous in that it foreboded ill as to a satisfactory answer to the question, now of so much importance.

"Come! can't you tell me how you hurt yourself?"

Still no answer.

"Mr. Ready," cried the cook, "where's my wood?"

"Oh, here it is;" and Mr. Ready turned and started for the galley, to hand Max the wood.

"I don't see how this thing happened," said Mr. Ready to Max. "I can't get a word out of the boy."

"You leave him to me, now," said Max, laughing. "You leave him to me; and when I tell him that he can have no supper till he tells me all about it, you will see what you will see;" and Max fairly held himself as he laughed at the idea. "I always brings them around that way, if I can't any other," Max added.

Mr. Ready laughed at this, and said:

"Well, take your own way, I can't do anything with him."

Thus Tod was left to himself for several hours. Every one marveled why he kept his place for so long a time, but there he remained, no one taking apparently any notice of him, and he of no one. The cook, alone,

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laughed to himself. For once this small black boy, Master Tod, had met with his master. The cook had very quietly lashed him into his chair while he was asleep.

"Ah," said the cook, "for once, my duck, I have you, this time, at least."

About two hours afterwards, while all hands were in the cabin, a renewed series of cries were heard, and Mr. Ready, as usual, rushed on deck to see what was up.

Tod had awakened to find himself fast, bound in a chair, with dark clouds above him, and supperless. No wonder that he howled. That was just what Max wanted, and, hearing the alarm, he was soon on deck.

"Ah, my fine bird," said Max, "I have you at last. All belayed, taut and hearty. I have you where the squirrel had the nut — right in the teeth. I have you where the mouse had the cheese — right in the stomach. We will now see if the squirrel cracks the nut or the cheese makes the mouse sick."

With this soliloquy Max approached Tod.

"Well, my fine fellow, do you want your supper?"

On seeing Max approach, Tod had stopped the noise he had been making, but, on hearing the question, he began howling and struggling again.

"You'll not get any that way, sir. Now see! Keep quiet! It is for your own good that we have done this. If you are not careful you will hit your finger, and then you will be obliged to have it, and maybe your whole hand, cut off. How would you like that? Hey?"

No answer followed this plain talk.

"Now I tell you," said Max, "you are old enough to know that you must keep still and not hurt your hand; do you know that?"

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Tod, fully reduced to his senses by nature and an intense gnawing in his stomach, sulked out a faint yes.

"Well, now," continued the cook, "listen: I will let you go, and will give you a good hot supper, but you must give me answer. How did you hurt yourself?"

Still no reply.

"Will you answer my question?"

No response.

"Very good, you get no supper to-night, my lad."

As Max turned to go, Tod began to struggle again, and to shout out, "I want my supper!"

"Ah! my fine bird, you can sing, can you?"

"I want my supper; let me go!"

"But you cannot fly, because your wings are clipped, my fine plover."

"Ah, Max! hadn't you better give him his supper? and then perhaps he will tell you afterwards."

"No, sir! I have him now, and he understands it. When he tells me what I have asked him, then he can have his supper hot," said Max.

Max laid great emphasis on the word hot; and Tod, hearing it, squirmed visibly, as it had been intended that he should.

"I want my supper," squirmed out Tod.

"You can have it when you tell me what I want to know," said Max, "as I told you."

Tod watched Max as he neared the forecastle, and saw that a great struggle was going on within him. He did not wish to tell how he had got hurt, for some reason known apparently only to himself; and yet he did not wish to lose his supper. Max's emphasis upon the word hot had evidently done the work, for, just as Max placed his foot on the forecastle step, Tod called out:

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"I'll never do so again. I'll give it back. I want my supper."

Max turned slowly, and seemed to consider for a moment just how to act. He had evidently gained a point, and how best to follow it out did not at first appear clear to him. He adopted the best course, however, and so sung out:

"All right, my hearty; your hot supper is ready for you."

While Max was approaching Tod, the latter was busy fumbling in his pocket with his whole hand, and when quite up to him, Tod, taking something out of his pocket, handed it to the cook.

"I took it," said Tod, "but I'll never do so again. It went off by accident and blowed my finger off."

"I should think it did," said Max. "It was a good job for you that it had not taken your hand or your head off. Now come and get your supper."

Tod, released, followed the cook to the galley, where Max had saved a plateful of hot chowder, and a hot cup of tea, with plenty of bread and butter. While Tod was busy at this Max started for the cabin.

Max entered the cabin. Everybody looked up to see who was coming. Max came right up to the table, and then said:

"Gentlemen, I think I have found the revolver that Master Freddie lost this morning. Isn't this it?" At the same time he placed the revolver on the table, telling them how he had induced Tod to give it to him.

"Yes, indeed," said the captain, who looked into the cabin at that moment from his wheel, "I saw him come out of the cabin this morning early, but had forgotten

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all about it until just now. He took the pistol. I know it now."

"Ah! h'm-m-m! Mr. Taylor," said a voice, that there was no difficulty in distinguishing as that of Mr. Benton's; "it strikes me as very remarkable, the way that things will occasionally, sir; I say occasionally, turn out, sir. I was very confident that my boy had not stolen his own brother's revolver, as Mr. Ready almost insinuated this morning, sir! I say, sir, this morning."

A loud burst of laughter from all hands quite startled Mr. Benton, who, turning around, scowled ominously as he said rather crossly:

"I see nothing to laugh at, sirs, at the fact of anybody's calling my boy a-a-a—"

But the laughter succeeding drowned the rest of the sentence, while Mr. Benton arose, and said, somewhat angrily:

"Boys, go to bed! go to bed, boys! I shall go immediately!"

Suiting the action to the word, Mr. Benton retired. From the recesses of his stateroom he called faintly:

"John! John! the boys will retire when you do, of course."

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CHAPTER V.

FIRST SIGHT OF LABRADOR.

"WELL, captain, where do you make our position?" asked Mr. Benton of the captain, the next morning, whom he suddenly came upon in the cabin as he was consulting his chart, and measuring distances on it with the dividers.

"We see land off to the westward," replied the captain.

"Do you know what it is?"

"No; but Mr. Ready thinks that it is Mecatina."

"I suppose that he ought to know. I believe that he has been down the coast some seventeen times, I think he told me."

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Well, can you tell me who else knows anything about the region around here?"

"Mr. Taylor has made the trip four or five times, and Mr. Furness several times. Mr. Taylor knows more about it than anybody else, unless it is Mr. Furness."

"The latter gentleman seems to be quite a seafaring man."

"Yes; he was down here a whole year, and he knows all the harbors up and down the coast when once we reach 'the Labrador.'"

"It is much easier to tell the places when you are near them, than when at a distance, as we are at the present

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time," said Mr. Furness, who just then joined the group and the conversation. "From the very faint line of coast, visible in the distance west of us, I imagine that we are much farther down the coast than Mecatina."

"Then yesterday we must have been off the eastern point of Anticosti," said Mr. Taylor, who at this moment also joined the group.

"Yes; so I should judge," laughed Mr. Ready, coming down the companion-way, at the same time scratching his head and winking his eyes at the group, all of whom had turned at sound of his voice. "We can't tell much where we are till we get there."

All hands laughed heartily at this witty sally, and turned their eyes once more to the chart.

"Here is Mecatina," said Mr. Ready, pointing to that place on the chart. "You see that there are two islands, and a headland on shore. The headland is seven hundred feet high, and the islands are called Big Mecatina and Little Mecatina. Every time I've been down here, before, we have struck either this headland or the highest of the islands. You are sure to know it, because it's the highest land anywhere about, save the Bradore hills, and these are mountains, down here."

"How high are they?" asked Mr. Benton.

"Oh, they vary from eleven to twelve hundred feet. There are three of them."

"The highest was laid down by the Coast Survey as twelve hundred and sixty-four feet," said Mr. Furness.

"And the next highest, eleven hundred and thirty-five feet," laughed Mr. Taylor, "since you are so particular as to height."

"And the intervening stretch of land reaches to the sea-level, Mr. Speaker," broke in Mr. Ready.

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Just at that moment Allie came into the cabin to tell the captain that he was wanted, and the chart was rolled up, and put away in the hanging braces, for the time, while all followed the captain on deck.

"What a pleasant day it is, papa," shouted Freddie, as he saw his father come on deck. "See, there is the loom of land over there, the mate says."

"Yes, my boy; and after our varied experiences, it is very satisfactory and pleasing intelligence," returned his father.

"Will you tell me what is the time?" said Max, coming forward at that moment, of Allie, who was just coming up the companion-way.

"It was just half-past seven o'clock when I was down in the cabin, a few moments ago."

"Thank you, sir. Gentlemen, your breakfast will be ready in about five minutes," said Max, as he disappeared into the galley.

At this pleasing intelligence the gentlemen proceeded to wash and arrange themselves for that most important ceremony.

"How clear and beautiful the atmosphere is! I say, Mr. Jacobs, do you not admire the fine weather this morning?"

"Ah, Mr. Taylor, is that you?"

The two gentlemen met at the wash dish, as they exchanged greetings, and, as each began by taking off his coat, then rolling up his sleeves, and unbuttoning his shirt collar, and laying one side his hat, a bystander, not seeing the wash basin, would have concluded that these warlike preparations portended an immediate combat of a most deadly character.

"I readily yield the first wash to you," said Mr. Taylor.

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"Yes; but if you had gone ahead, and washed yourself, you would have finished by this time."

"But as I have not even begun, but must go into the cabin for my soap, I shall leave you and the wash dish to consult each other's tastes while I am gone."

"Which we are in no way bashful about doing," remarked Mr. Jacobs, as he submerged his face in the basin of clear, cold water.

Fifteen minutes later, and the whole party were arranged in festal order once more, waiting impatiently for the breakfast to be passed.

"Well, gentlemen," exclaimed Mr. Ready, as he suddenly steamed out of the galley door, "the bill of fare is oatmeal, or fried mush and molasses, ham and eggs, eggs dropped or boiled, hot or cold biscuits and butter, and coffee. We can't give you any more, because we haven't got it."

"I don't know what we want any better than that—"

"If he will only hurry up and give us that!" chimed in a voice, not easily mistaken as that of Master Freddie.

"Oh, yes; you *are* the youngest, and get helped last," said Mr. Ready, "that's a fact."

The laugh went around, and Freddie subsided immediately. A moment later, and all were eagerly engaged in the process of eating breakfast.

"What a beautiful day it is," said Mr. Taylor to Mr. Benton, a little while after breakfast, as the two gentlemen met on the gangway.

"Very fine day, sir; remarkable weather. It is quite satisfactory to have such fine weather."

"Some difference, sir, I admit. They say that there is the loom of land in the distance. I suppose that is it,"

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said Mr. Benton, pointing to a heavy cloud bank in the south.

Mr. Taylor smiled, but made no other remark than that it would be "clearer by and by."

Mr. Ready was seen, forward, pacing the deck, and evidently watching, with eagle eye, the merest outline of land to be seen in the distance. Seeing Mr. Taylor and Mr. Benton talking, he joined them.

"We'll get on land again, soon," said Mr. Ready.

"Shall we follow the coast up or down, Mr. Ready?"

"Oh, down, sir. We shall probably touch at Mecatina first, and then follow the coast down as far as Belle Isle, Mr. Taylor."

"Belle Isle is a most interesting place to go to, Mr. Ready," said Mr. Benton. "I have long wished to go there, just to see the place — just to see the place, sir."

"One can tell that we are near land by the number of birds," remarked Mr. Taylor.

At that moment a large flock of birds flew past the vessel. Allie, who happened to see them, shouted out at once:

"Oh, there they are! See them! What are they? Tell me, somebody, do!"

"Those are auks, my boy," said Mr. Ready.

"Oh, no; those are not hawks."

"No, no; *auks*, not *hawks*."

"What are auks?" asked Allie.

"They belong to the lowest order of the water birds, and are very rare in any other part of the globe than in regions similar to those we are in at the present," said Mr. Jacobs.

"Tell us some more about them, said Freddie Benton, who was also standing near, and had heard what had been said.

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"I will give you a nut to crack," replied the professor. "The true water birds of North America are divided into four orders. Of these, the last or lowest are called the pygopodes, or the diving birds. The auks comprise the lowest family of the order, and thus, as I told you before, they are among the lowest of our birds. That is, they are the least perfectly developed. The wings, as you will find, are shut, and incapable of long-continued flight; the tail is small; and the legs set upon the remote part of the body, so that they seldom fly far, and live exclusively in the water, being unable to walk on land. Now the classes and families of birds are made up generally from some characteristic peculiar to the whole group. Can you tell me, then, why, and the meaning of the name I have given you of pygopodes?"

"I can tell you one name, but not the other. The last part is from a Greek word meaning feet."

"Yes, very good; but the other word is one that means situated on the rear or rump of the body, and is given to the class because their feet are situated so far on the hinder part of the body, that the bird can with great difficulty walk or even step when on land. But you will get a fair chance to study these same birds later on, when you have shot some of them, and can compare them and study their peculiarities. Are not those the outlines of high hills, that I see in the distance, on the left, Mr. Ready?"

"They are; they are the Mecatina highlands we spoke of, some time ago. That is the first land that we usually sight on the Labrador coast. When we get there we know where we are."

"Shall we go anywhere near it, or shall we go farther down before making a stopping place?"

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"The good Lord willing, we shall stop at the very first stopping place that we can find."

"Well, that is good news, now, really. One can really gain a great deal of courage, with such a prospect as that in view."

"I think, professor," said Mr. Furness, "that I shall go into a new line of investigation."

"Do you, indeed! I hope that it is something interesting."

"I am going into the business of collecting sea-weeds. I'm going to see how many kinds I can get."

"That's a good idea, and, if I remember aright, Mr. Taylor is a botanist."

Though Mr. Taylor laughed at the sally, for he had, in his trunk at that moment, a good-sized tin botany case, with a press of wire sides,—a new invention by which it was claimed that the flowers were dried more easily and quickly while being pressed—and a large quantity of drying paper. He had come prepared to make a large and extensive collection, with a view of studying carefully the flora of the country.

"Let us see," said Mr. Jacobs, "we have in our party an ornithologist and oölogist, that is one who is making a study of birds and their eggs; and algologist, one who is making a study of algæ or sea-weeds; an ichthyologist, or one who is studying fishes; and several who are studying sea animals, and collecting the same. All those animals brought up with the dredge, pass under the name of marine invertebrates, and among them are all sorts of animals, and a great variety of animal life."

"Tell me, Mr. Jacobs, why you call them invertebrates," said Allie Benton; "our teacher told us that we couldn't divide animals into vertebrates and invertebrates,

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because there was an animal that was half one and half the other, and would have to be put into a division of its own if you did. He called the thing a something that meant some Greek word, and something about some animal, but I don't remember what the name was."

Mr. Jacobs smiled as he assisted Allie's memory with the name of amphioxus, and added:

"You need not be afraid that the divisions you have mentioned will become old and unreliable for some years. We are a long ways from developing a man or boy an amœba."

"What is an amœba?"

"I see that you will presently have me involved in a discussion as to 'first causes,'" laughed the professor. "The amœba is an animal of the lowest or nearly the lowest class, and is simply a mass of substance, like that of the white of an egg, and called protoplasm, containing a nucleus which the protoplasm surrounds. It is among the first forms of animal matter, and is a most curious animal to observe, in a small trough of water, under the microscope. Now you must let me off on further explanation, as you are getting along too fast."

"Why too fast, sir?" asked Allie.

"We teach natural history differently from what we do the languages or philosophy; we study the animals themselves, and tell of the specimens as we have them directly before us to illustrate with, as far as possible; but see, we are approaching the land."

The vessel was, indeed, by this time, fast approaching the island towards which she was headed, and was now about ten miles away. The land as yet appeared only as a high headland, sloping down upon either side, and with other high lands behind it and low islands in front

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of it. On dashed the vessel through the waves, and there was not a passenger who did not seem heartily pleased to be so near land, no matter of how rocky an outline.

"Harrington harbor, ahoy!" shouted Mr. Ready, from the other side of the galley.

"Is that Harrington harbor that we see, then, where that gap in the hills is?" asked Mr. Taylor, who was standing near.

"Yes, sir," exclaimed Mr. Ready, in a most emphatic way, "that *is* Harrington outer harbor, and we shall be there in about an hour, if the wind holds."

"We will hope, sincerely, that the wind will hold, then," said Mr. Taylor, laughing.

"Yes, indeed," added Allie, "I want to get ashore and find some of those auks' and gulls' eggs that Jack has been telling us about."

"You'll find plenty of them there, no fear, my boy," said Mr. Ready.

"What other kinds can I find? Tell me; tell me all the kinds that will be there."

"Well, let me see. There will be ducks' eggs, eider ducks, any amount of them; then on the top of the island you will find two or three kinds of gulls' eggs."

"What kinds?"

"There is the common herring gull, then there is a species that they call here the fresh water gull, but which your book calls, I believe, the ice gull; and there is the great black-backed gull. The largest of all, and the fellow that has the large black back and legs, while all the rest is white — they call him the coffin-carrier."

"Then what about the auks, you told us about day before yesterday?" Allie continued.

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"Oh, yes," said Mr. Ready. "The razor-billed auk is one species, and the other is called the foolish guillemot. Another is called the black guillemot or sea pigeon, the people call it simply the pigeon, and you might see a few puffins."

"Is that all?"

"Yes; I don't think of any more that you are sure of getting. You will probably get all of those I have mentioned, if you work hard for them. There are several islands, near where we are going; and we are just in season to get some birds' eggs. We can lay in a stock to eat, too."

"What! do these birds you have been speaking of, lay eggs that are fit to eat?" asked Mr. Taylor.

"Oh, yes," said Mr. Ready, "we eat all of them, and they are first rate, too."

"Can you get enough of them, for all to have one?"

"Oh, mercy sakes, yes. Why, one year we stopped here and filled a barrel. We had them all the rest of the voyage, until we reached the Magdaline Islands, on our way home."

"Well, do you think we can get a mess this time?"

"Oh, yes; we will have enough to satisfy all of you, if there are any there," said Mr. Ready, as he disappeared down the forecastle.

The boys were delighted at the prospect of rambling, unlimited, over the islands, and coming home with baskets literally full of birds' eggs, and great was the rejoicing at the idea. All three of them started at once for their box of apparatus for blowing eggs, so as to have it in readiness, against the time when they should return laden with the expected spoils. John easily found it in one corner of his trunk, and soon returned with several

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egg drills and small blow pipes, to the apparent delight of Freddie, who was dancing about the deck like a young savage. After awhile Jack Ready joined them, and all four retired to one corner of the vessel to talk over their plans.

"Now, Jack," said John, "you have been here before, haven't you?"

"Oh, yes; wait until we get to the island, and then we will all go ashore, and you come with me, and we will see what we can get. Have you got any stout wire?"

"I can find a piece, I guess," said Freddie.

In a moment Freddie returned with about a foot of stout iron wire he had found in the cabin, and gave it to Jack.

"Now," said Jack, "we will make something that will get the eggs for you."

Jack then got a long stick, which he whittled down to a roundish shape, then on one end he cut two channels or grooves, into which he inserted the two ends of the wire, bent double. These he tied down tightly with a piece of stout twine. Then he bent the end of the wire into the form of a hook.

"There," said he, "now you can hook up the eggs, from the crevices, until you have as many as you want."

"Why do birds lay in the crevices, instead of out in the open grass or sand?" asked Freddie.

"I don't know that," said Jack, "but they do. They lay way under the rocks, and down in holes where you couldn't even reach them, if you did not have one of these instruments that I have just fixed. Each bird lays one egg only, and yet you will sometimes find a nook, among the rocks, where the birds and the eggs are as thick as if each bird laid twenty. I have found forty to fifty eggs at a time in one place."

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"Why, are they as thick as that?" put in John.

"Yes, you will soon get your baskets full."

"Do they all lay in among the rocks?"

"Oh, no; the ducks lay right out among the grass, and the gulls lay the same, but nearer to the top of the islands. Then all the auks lay under the rocks, and over the island anywhere, but mostly where the rocks are."

"Don't they make any nest?" asked Freddie.

"No, the auks do not; they lay right out on the open earth or rock. The gulls and ducks make a nest. The gulls pile up a little heap of grass and grass stems about the edges of the nest, but put very little or nothing inside for the middle, so that the eggs that they lay often rest on the bare rock. They lay four eggs. The duck's nest is one mass of fluffy down. They pick the feathers from their own breast, to make the nest with, and then lay about four eggs and sit on them. The eggs fill up the hollow, on the breast, that has been made by pulling the feathers out."

"But don't the auks set on their eggs?"

"Not that I know of. I never knew of their doing so. Generally they lay their eggs, and then let the sun hatch them out."

"And do they never set on their own eggs? That seems singular enough."

"The people on the coast think that they don't. Some people say that they do. At any rate, you will see eggs lying around everywhere, and you can never find a bird on one of them. These auks are half fish, anyway."

"Yes; and there is a curious thing," said Mr. Ready, coming up at that moment, "the people who won't eat

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meat on Friday will eat these birds, because they say that they are more water than land animals, and more fish than animal."

"That is remarkable," said Mr. Benton, who had just walked up to where the boys were sitting, to see what they were about.

"Yes," continued Mr. Ready, "and these same men will eat seal meat, for the same reason."

"Will they, indeed!"

"Yes; they call it all fish."

"That is a good excuse for getting over the difficulty."

"It is something like taking a nip of liquor every day for medicine, and then saying that they have not broken their temperance pledge," laughed Mr. Ready.

"I should say so," remarked Mr. Benton. "Well, boys," continued he, "what are you at now?"

"Oh, father; Jack is telling us all about the birds that he says we will find on the island, and we are going to get our baskets full of birds' eggs," answered Freddie.

"Baskets full of birds' eggs!" said Mr. Benton. "I'll give you a penny apiece for all the eggs over a dozen that you find. You'll find more rocks than eggs."

"Oh, Mr. Taylor," called Allie. "Come here quick, do."

When Mr. Taylor had arrived, and heard what they were talking about, he laughed heartily. "The boys will get nearer five hundred than five," said he.

Mr. Benton, as usual, was obstinate in favor of his own opinion; and, taking out his pocketbook, he carefully extracted a crisp, new five dollar note, which he handed to Mr. Taylor.

"There!" exclaimed Mr. Benton, "that is for the

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boys, in case they find the five hundred eggs you tell about."

Then Mr. Benton laughed, the boys clapped their hands, and all joined in the merriment.

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CHAPTER VI.

FIRST DAY ON SHORE.

"HERE we are at Labrador!" called out Mr. Ready, as the vessel slowly approached a long point of low land, which ran down into the sea from a high hill-like island. "All hands on deck to go ashore!"

As he said this, all hands crowded forward to watch the scene, while the vessel continued to glide onward toward its destined port.

"Steady!" shouted the captain, to the man at the wheel. "Sheer her off a little! don't let her run on that breaker ahead!"

"Aye, aye!" answered the man.

"Keep her steady, now!"

"Which opening shall I head for?" shouted the man. "The smaller one right ahead, or the larger one at the left?"

"Head her for the small one."

"There is a breaker just inside the large one," said Mr. Ready. "We could not get in there if we did try to go that way."

"All right! steady she is," said the man.

Just then the vessel came abreast of the point, and opened up a large, spacious harbor, enclosed on all sides by land, either islands or headlands, one could not at first tell which. The captain then went aft and took the wheel himself, while he sent the man forward to loose

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the anchor. This did not take long, and when it had been accomplished the captain called out again: "All hands stand by to tack ship!"

The vessel was now so far beyond the point, that, by tacking, she could easily reach the middle of the harbor, or stand on till it had come close to shore, as the pilot said that there was plenty of water on the lee shore.

The rattling of ropes, and the usual hurry and bustle of the men, as well as the flapping of the sails, accompanied the captain's order.

"Let go," shouted the captain, and the jib springing to the other side of the vessel was made fast. Then the foresail and the mainsail jumped around two or three times, and finally settled into their proper position, as they filled, and the vessel, under the fresh impulse, fairly cut the water as it steamed towards the further point of the harbor.

"Stand by your anchor!" once more shouted the captain, as the little schooner dashed the spray from its prow, in its straining to reach the point.

"Haul down your jib!" A few seconds later:— "Down with your foresail!" and a few seconds more: "Let go your anchor!" and the chains tore through the horse-pipes, with a rattling and a clanking loud enough to deafen any one within gunshot of the vessel.

"Hooray for Labrador!" shouted Mr. Ready, waving his cap vigorously.

"Lower away the boats; let's go ashore."

At that the sailors sprang to the boats, and soon had them lowered and alongside.

The vessel, as it came along, had aroused from their nests and roosting places hosts of birds, of all kinds.

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They flew in clouds about the islands, near which the schooner had been anchored. They were everywhere, filling the air, the earth, and the waters. Upon first entering the harbor but few had been seen; but they were all there. — There were literally thousands of them. They flew through the air like arrows. — They crossed and re-crossed the vessel, flying above and below the rigging, and all about on every side. The water, at a little distance from the schooner, was literally alive with birds, and the ground of the island seemed planted with them. Every rock or point of land was covered with them, and they looked, perched there on their little black legs, like so many sentinels.

"Don't they look like ministers?" cried Freddie.

Allie laughed heartily; but Mr. Ready, who happened to be standing near, said:

"They call these same birds priests, so I am told, in the South arctic regions."

"They are waiting for the gulls to come to confessional, I guess."

"It will be a cold day, when the gulls confess to them," said Allie.

"I guess the gulls would make them confess," chimed in Freddie. "See! see! there is a great, big, immense fellow, with a great black back, flying around up there in the sky with all those other gulls. See! he is diving after that smaller gull, that has just caught a fish; he has made him drop the fish, and now he has caught it himself, — say, Allie; he has caught it himself before it could drop."

"Which one, Freddie?"

"Ah! he is way off, now. I can't see him myself," said Freddie, "they are so thick."

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"Look at the gulls up in the air!" cried Jack, who just then came along.

"Oh, Mr. Ready!" exclaimed John, as the former passed over the rail into the boat, "can't we stay here all day to-morrow?"

"Why, yes, indeed!" answered Mr. Ready, "I guess we are all willing to do that, after the shaking up we had last night. For my part, I doubt if we get away for two or three days; but we cannot tell positively just at present."

"Oh, Freddie!" fairly screamed Allie. "See that old duck, with all those little ones. There she is, way down by the point, in the little cove, way up by the grass. See! see! there must be ten or twenty of them. No! there is only three; yes, four of them. Ain't they pretty!"

"Can't we get some of them alive?"

"How I wish we could!"

"We'll try it anyway, if Mr. Ready will let us."

"What's that you want to do, my boy?" said Mr. Ready from the boat, who had heard his name called.

"Oh, I don't know," said Freddie. "I guess I want to stop and think." And he sat down on the deck house perfectly exhausted. "I say, Allie! I guess I won't read Mayne Reid's Cliff-Climbers to-night. I don't believe what he says, because I don't think that he had ever been there himself; and how could he know that it was true, if he had never been there?"

"I say, papa! did anybody ever write a story about Labrador?"

"Not that I know of," replied Mr. Benton.

"Well, I wish somebody had, and that I could read it beforehand. I think it would be ever so nice to know

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something beforehand about the things and places that we are going to see!"

As Mr. Benton got into the boat, Mr. Ready remarked: "I think, Mr. Benton, there will be three tired boys to-night."

"Yes, yes! if they don't get used up before night comes on. That's all I'm afraid of — they are good boys, though."

"Yes, indeed, sir! I never saw better."

"All hands on board!" shouted Mr. Taylor.

"I think that we won't take our cans and collecting boxes, to-night," said Mr. Ready, as the boys started for the cabin to get their collecting apparatus. "We will have all day to-morrow to work in; and now we will go over to the other side of the point and see Mr. McIntyre, who has just built him a nice new house, and fishing establishment, on the inside of the cove. We'll get some fresh milk, and get a rest for an hour or so."

The boys looked a little disappointed, for the moment, but soon brightened up, and put away their boxes and got into the boat without a word.

A minute later, and both boats were pulling for the place indicated.

Mr. McIntyre had seen the masts of the *North Star*, as she rode cosily at anchor, with the stars and stripes at the main top, and was on the landing ready to receive his visitors.

"Well, well!" said Mr. McIntyre. — "Who have we here?" as the genial face of Mr. Ready, at the bow of the boat, approached the wharf.

"An old hand," laughed Mr. Ready. "You have changed quarters, since we were here last!"

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"Oh yes! Had a good year with fish, last season, so I thought I'd fix up a little."

"I should think you had fixed up a little," said Mr. Ready, stepping on to the wharf, and looking about him in surprise. "When I was here last year, you had an old, broken down wharf, and an old, broken down house on it, that you used to call the 'pig-sty,'" laughed Mr. Ready.

"Well, yes!" said Mr. McIntyre; "and the whole place was about as like one as you could make it."

"Now, *I* should say," said Mr. Ready, "that the pig had been *dressed!*" Mr. Ready laughed as he said this, and nudged Mr. McIntyre in the side; then Mr. McIntyre laughed, and said: "Yes! and you have come just in time to have some served to you and your friends. By the way, why don't you introduce them to me?"

"Oh! I forgot. This is Mr. Benton and his three boys, and these gentlemen — Mr. Taylor, Mr. Jacobs, Mr. Furness, and Mr. Murphy. This is my son, Jack, whom you know."

"Welcome, gentlemen!" Mr. McIntyre replied, cordially. "Come up to the hut. It will cover you all, I guess, and that's about all."

"Yes! and I suppose your wife and two children —"

"Three, if you please, Mr. Ready," and Mr. McIntyre tapped Mr. Ready on the shoulder, lightly, with his fingers.

"Ah, yes! certainly!" replied Mr. Ready, looking very much surprised, — "three children will be there to welcome us."

"Yes, yes! Walk up to the house, gentlemen!"

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Mr. McIntyre then led the way to the house, and all the party followed.

The house was small, but cosy looking, and neatly painted white, while the sills and doors were red. It was a story and a half high, and attached to it was a smaller house or room, used as a kitchen. A neat little porch ran from the house door to the end of the smaller room, and the latter had a large door-like window, that opened almost to the foot of the porch. At a little distance to the right was a small shed or barn, where Mr. McIntyre kept two cows and a billy goat, and a young bull. A very small garden was also visible, from behind the barn; and a huge pile of wood, stacked up like an Indian's wigwam, was between the barn and the house.

"Well!" said Mr. Ready, "you really are somebody, with all these fine things. Why, here's Mrs. McIntyre, I do declare!"

Mrs. McIntyre was a rather short, but fat and good-natured looking lady, of about forty years, and much different from her tall, full-bearded, yet genial husband.

"I declare! Why, Mr. Ready, how do you do? What a long time since you were here last!"

"Yes! so I thought I would come down and see you. You've got fixed up considerably since we were down here."

"Well, yes! And that's the reason that I can give you all so much more pleasant a reception than last year. You see the fishing turned out well, and — but, walk into the house, gentlemen."

"These are passengers who came down here to see the coast," put in Mr. Ready, who then introduced all to Mrs. as he had done at the landing to Mr. McIntyre.

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"Walk into the parlor, gentlemen!" said Mrs. McIntyre, as she led the way.

The parlor was a small, but pleasant little room, quite nicely furnished, for so small an establishment, and one situated so far out of the world. It contained many conveniences, and even luxuries. There was a sofa, an easy chair, a rocking-chair, and several little articles of convenience besides. In one corner of the room was a small organ, open, and with one of the Moody and Sankey hymn-books on it. In the opposite corner was a small table with several fancy things upon it, and a number of books. On the mantel were several articles of use and some curiosities, and over it hung a large chromo of a sea view, with huge cliffs on either side, the moon shining through the clouds, and a ship under full sail going in a most remarkable manner, and sails filled with a wind blowing dead ahead.

It took but a few moments to see all of these things, and to find, further, that the walls were papered with real wall paper, of a neat pattern; that the windows had curtains of a bluish shade and with gilt pattern, and that everything had a pleasant and home-like appearance, even to the neat, clean, white floor, covered with home-made rugs.

"It is comfortably, but not expensively furnished, sirs!" said Mrs. McIntyre. "And now, if you will excuse me, I will go and prepare supper for you! Oh yes, sir! we always do it for strangers, and you'll not deny us the privilege!"

The latter remark had been called forth by an attempt on the part of Mr. Benton to say *no*, or something else equally negative.

"Ah, certainly!" observed Mr. Ready. "We can go

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aboard for supper, just as well, and it will save you a great deal of extra trouble."

"Now, gentlemen! we shall leave you for about half an hour to take care of yourselves. You can go out of doors or stay in the house, whichever you see fit. Here, Mason! show the gentlemen around the place."

A tall, strapping boy, of about fifteen, appeared at the door, and bowed an awkward sort of a bow, as he entered and said: "If you'll come with me out here, I'll show you the cows!"

"Mason!" screamed his mother, "can't you go out of the front door?"

"The beer barrel's out here," replied Mason, disappearing through the door.

"If you follow him, he'll show you," Mr. McIntyre said faintly, as the door closed, and the party followed Mason through the side door into a sort of wood-shed or large back-room, that extended the whole width of both the large and small house, and appeared to be a sort of wash-room and wood-shed combined.

Mason was standing at a huge barrel, set upon a small wooden table, holding the faucet in one hand and a mug in the other, into which latter article a brownish liquid was running with a light froth accumulating, gradually, on the top. When the mug was full, he handed it to Mr. Benton who took a suspicious look at the contents, before drinking.

"Drink it, sir! we all does!" said Mason.

Mr. Benton put the cup to his lips to take a new taste, prepared to pass it around to the next one immediately after; but, somehow, after he had taken the first sip he stood holding the cup to his lips for a minute. When he took it down he smacked his lips and actually

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laughed aloud. Mason filled the mug again and passed it on until every one had tried it. Then, strange to say, Mr. Benton thought that he would try another mugful, and so — on it passed again. Then they all went out to the barn and saw the cows and the goat; into the garden and saw the young potatoes, cabbage, lettuce, and turnip heads; out to the spring and saw where they got their water, — from a spring that ran down the hillside; then back into the house, and another stop at the beer barrel; and so on to the parlor again.

"What do you make your beer of?" said Mr. Benton.

"Of spruce steeped in water, and molasses, and water, and rise it with some of the last mixing," replied Mason. "We drink it in place of water."

"What a sweet, fresh taste it has."

"Yes, sir! we makes it fresh every day!"

"Supper is ready, sirs! will ye please comes out and takes tea?"

Mr. Ready, leading the way, all went into the room opposite, where a good fire was brightly burning, — for it was now quite chilly out; and sat down to a large well-filled table. A large platter containing salt-codfish, roasted in the oven, on a piece of clean brown paper, occupied the center of the table, with a bowl of pork gravy, with small, crispy pieces of fried pork in it, sat close by; two heaping plates of warm biscuits, and a large plate of home-made butter were also not far off; while a huge dish or tureen, heaping full of large, variously colored and spotted eggs, presented a curious appearance.

When all were seated (grace having been asked, while all were standing about the table), the tea was poured

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out and real cream, and white sugar, put into each cup. The biscuits and butter were passed; the codfish and pork scraps; and soon all were busily engaged in testing the quality of Mrs. McIntyre's good cheer. The boys, and some of the grown folks also, had mugs of rich milk. Huge inroads were made into the biscuits and butter, and slowly the platter of codfish became more and more empty. Then the pile of eggs began gradually to diminish, and Allie looked with longing eyes at each one, as its thick, but handsomely marked shell was cracked and peeled off of its curious skim-milk-looking white inside.

"Never mind, Freddie! we'll get plenty to-morrow;" he whispered to his brother.

"Plenty of what, did you say?" said Mr. Benton.

Allie looked rather foolish, and turned a little red, as he answered, "Eggs."

"Bless your heart!" said Mrs. McIntyre. "You can get them by the barrelful, to-morrow, if you want them. Mason will go all over the island with you and show you all about it."

"Jack," began Allie.

"Sh–sh–" whispered Jack.

"Come, pass me some butter!"

"Oh!" said Jack, evidently relieved that Allie was not going to say anything about his previous offer to show them around, now that Mason was going to perform that duty.

Thus the meal went on, article after article disappearing, until nearly all had vanished. After the meal, grace was then said, all standing.

"If yous waits in the parlor awhile, wes'ill clear the table, then yous can sit in here by the fire," said Mrs.

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McIntyre; so all retired to the parlor again, while Mary, who had been rocking cradle meanwhile, came in and sat down by the organ and began to play. Gradually the playing, which though not perfect, was quite good, came to be more and more familiar, until, before anybody realized it, all had assembled close around the organ and were singing, to the best of their powers, from the well-known pages of Moody and Sankey, No. 2. About half an hour later Mr. McIntyre came into the room, called Mary and told her that her mother wanted her, and announced that he could accommodate with rooms all those who would stay on shore and sleep at his house. Mr. Benton expressed great surprise that the house would hold so many; but Mr. McIntyre declared that there was "plenty of room for all."

Mr. Ready and Jack declined to stay, saying that they must go back to the ship; but Mrs. McIntyre refused to hear anything of the kind, so Mason was sent over, in the dory, to tell the captain and cook not to expect the party on board "before dinner to-morrow," at any rate. About nine o'clock Mary came in with a light in her hands "to show the gentlemen their rooms," as Jack declared that he heard her mother tell her, and all followed up a narrow flight of crooked stairs, to their chambers. Mr. Benton and his sons were turned into one room with two beds in it; the four gentlemen into a similar room upon the opposite side, opening out of which was a small single room, which was allotted to Mr. Ready and his son. The rooms were small, but cosily furnished, and the beds clean and soft. The ticks and pillows were of feathers, and there was plenty of clothing. Each room also had a table on which was a candle burning, in a small horn candlestick.

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"Well, gentlemen!" said Mary; "I wishes you all good evening," and down stairs she went, leaving the company for the night.

The room that the four gentlemen had was a corner room and overlooked the harbor, so that now, from a nearly cloudless sky, the moon and stars shone down most beautifully upon the quiet scene below. The air was rather chilly, but not really cold, and Mr. Murphy, going to the southwest window, which was in a sort of an alcove, and somewhat screened from the rest of the room, opened it, and, lighting his pipe, sat smoking and enjoying the scene. For a long while he sat and smoked in silence, — watching the sky, as some mere fleck of a cloud would cross it, perhaps for a moment obscuring the disk of the moon, or the light of some star; watching the water, which reflected, even at that distance, the ripples playing upon its surface. There was the broad bay to which the island sloped gradually at the left, and another island with a small passage between it and still another and much higher one. Over the crest of the hill, at the right, were the tall cliffs of a third, and not far off could be seen the top-mast of a vessel from which fluttered a small, neat flag: it was the stars and stripes of the *North Star*. There it fluttered and rippled, like the surface of the water over which it waved, — still Mr. Murphy smoked on in placid enjoyment, unmindful of the fact that it was gradually growing colder in the room.

"Well, Mr. Murphy," said Mr Furness, "if you really wish to sleep out-of-doors, nobody will object, provided we are not obliged to do so."

No response followed this mild suggestion, but Mr. Murphy very quietly drew his head inside of the win-

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dow, knocked the ashes out of his pipe on the sill, and, with a sigh — or possibly a very deep breath — arose and shut the window. In a short time all were quietly sleeping, and the silence of night had settled upon every person and every thing.

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CHAPTER VII.

COLLECTING SPECIMENS.

THE following morning, all hands were up and about at a very early hour. Luckily the weather was fine, thus giving them a capital chance to walk out and take the air before breakfast.

The boys were up earlier than the gentlemen, and, with Jack and Mason, were off, almost by daylight, to take a look around the island. Mrs. McIntyre and her daughter were busy preparing breakfast for their guests, while Mr. McIntyre was just outside the porch, chopping wood for the fire.

The scene, outside of the house, was one of serenity. The sun was shedding his beams upon the earth and rippling water, on the bosom of which the *North Star* rode placidly, or coquetted with an occasional billow as it surged through the narrow opening, into the harbor, from the sea outside, which, though not heavy, was somewhat ruffled by the slight wind blowing from the southwest.

Though the men portion of the guests were supposed to have opened their eyes and rolled over in their beds, and to be indulging in that delicious of all restful sleep, — a second morning nap — not all were thus employed. A glance at one of the windows would have revealed the calm, genial face of Mr. Murphy, with his inseparable meerschaum, gazing at the scene, and quite in apparent harmony with it.

An hour later, and men, boys, and all, were once more

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gathered around Mrs. McIntyre's genial board, where they were soon busily engaged with fresh roast cod, hot biscuits, tea and coffee, with rich cream, — besides milk for those who wished. The gentlemen took their time, and fully enjoyed every moment with the abundance of good cheer provided for them; the boys hurried through with their portion of the meal, and soon struck off, with Jack Ready and Mason, for the *North Star.*

"Come, boys," said Mason, "hurry up and get into the boat, while I untie the painter."

One after another, the boys fairly tumbled into the boat, while Jack reached for the oars, and Allie began to bail out the water that had soaked into it during the night. A moment later and Mason had thrown the painter into the boat, and, taking the extra oar, was soon with Jack pulling away from the land.

"Let's go to the *North Star* first," said Jack, "and get our things."

As this seemed to be the sentiment of all hands, the boat's head was turned toward the vessel. A short row sufficed to reach it, and the boys scrambled over the side in such haste that they fairly took Max by surprise, as he was coming up the forecastle.

"Savages!" screamed Freddie, at the top of his voice. "On deck to repel boarders!"

"All right," Max's pleasant voice laughingly replied, "I'll begin by repelling you." And grasping two of the boys by the shoulder with each hand, and forcing them against the third, pushed all three clear across the deck, in spite of their resistance, and pinned them in the corner of the lee scupper.

"There now," cried Max, laughing heartily, "I repel three of them."

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The boys laughed in spite of themselves.

"We surrender," cried Jack.

"All right, gentlemens," said Max, "if you surrenders, you can come aboard."

"My gracious, Allie," said John; "I'd no idea Max was so strong! He is so small I almost thought I could lick him myself."

"Hurry up," sounded a voice from the boat's side; and a wave brought Mason's head on a level with the vessel's gunwale.

In a moment the collecting gun was aboard, and the boys followed soon after. Hastily stowing a few hard-tack into the boat's cuddy, for a luncheon, in case of necessity, the oars were resumed, and the boat headed for one of a small group of islands just visible outside of the harbor.

Allie had his gun, with plenty of powder and shot; Jack had his revolver, which had been arranged so as to fasten to a false butt or handle, thus appearing like a small rifle; John carried two pails for eggs; and Freddie the egg hook with another pail, and a small can for flowers. Thus fitted out, the boys rowed for the island. They had not rowed far before Mason suddenly dropped his oar, and, seizing his gun, rushed to the bow of the boat; a moment, and bang went the gun.

"Have you got him?" shouted Freddie.

"Yes, I've got him, I think."

"What is it?"

"It's a pigeon," said Mason.

"What's a pigeon, Mason?" said Freddie; but, as Mason was now busy aiming again, Jack answered:

"It's a pigeon, or black guillemot, and they are the quickest birds to dive there are, next to an old sea duck;

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see, there he is again. Mason did not hit him the first time, and now he is going to try again."

Before Jack had finished speaking, bang went the gun again, and this time Mason dropped his gun, and, picking up the oar, began to row furiously.

"Lay in to it, Jack; there she is; we'll get her. I say, Allie; you stand in the bow ready to pick her up."

Away sped the boat in the new direction, and in a few moments Allie had picked up the dead bird, and laid it on the thwart of the boat, so the blood and water would drop from its plumage. This had hardly been accomplished before Mason cried out:

"Say, Allie; isn't your gun loaded? There's another bird, just ahead. See it?"

"Where? Yes; here's the gun," answered Allie.

"Try it yourself," said Mason. "Hurry up."

Allie, only too eager to try his luck, reached for his gun, and stood waiting for a shot.

"There he is! Shoot as he dips his bill to feed," said Mason.

Allie took a quick aim and fired.

"There," said Jack, "killed him first shot."

A moment more and this second specimen was lying with the first, and the boat sped on. As no more birds appeared near by, Allie loaded his barrel again, and then loaded Mason's two barrels, that both guns might be in readiness for the next occasion. This soon arrived, for at that instant a huge gull soared directly over the boat, and Jack, catching up Mason's gun, fired at it. The huge bird, doubling up its wings, and turning over and over several times, shot downward like an arrow. The boys ducked their heads, by a natural impulse, as the gull landed, with a thwack, in the very center of the boat.

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"Phew-ew!" whistled Freddie, "I thought he'd hit me, sure!"

It seemed rather strange, but everybody confessed to having the same feeling. Mason picked up the bird and said:

"It's a fresh water gull."

"That's what we call a glaucus or ice gull," said Allie.

"And this," said Mason, seizing his gun and discharging the remaining loaded barrel at a bird which was flying close to the water, just across the bow of the boat, "is an eider duck, and a male at that."

It was, indeed, a beautiful bird, with a mixture of dark and white plumage; but what excited the boys' admiration the most was the beautiful white puffy cheeks, tinged with pea green; but there was no time to examine it carefully, for its mate soon flew by, and Allie successfully brought her down with his left barrel, which still remained loaded. Thus the boys loaded and fired, again and again, until they reached the island with every available dry space in their boat crowded with dead birds, all laid out carefully, that the blood might drip from mouth and plumage, and that their feathers might dry, so that Allie — who was already quite an adept at taxidermy — might skin them, previous to taking them home and stuffing them for his collection.

After much excitement and a great many attempts the boat reached the island; Mason then drew her around into a small cove, formed by the curving of some large bowlders, where she would not rock, and moored her. All hands jumped on shore, with their bag, cans, and pails, and deposited them on the beach, in a bunch of grass, just above high water mark. As the island was not very large, and rather high and

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rocky, making it difficult traveling with so many articles, it was decided first to go egging, then ascend to the higher part of the island, collecting flowers and other specimens; so off all hands started, with pails and egg hook, — while the birds flew about in countless thousands, above, and around them.

Mason was already down on his hands and knees, digging into a huge cleft of the rocks, from which he had just hauled out, by the legs, three birds, and was after the fourth, while two or three times as many eggs lay within reach close by. John had started to help him, but had fallen upon a large nest of most beautiful light down, full of eider duck eggs; this he was trying to take home as it was, so he stowed it into the bottom of his pail and threw some grass over it, before putting in anything else; but John did not stop here. A little distance farther was another nest, but of a far different character from that of the first, being small, of fine grass stems, and deeply set into a hollow in the center of a clump of grass, and containing five longish eggs, spotted or rather blotched with light brown spots, some of which were of a faint lilac tint. While John was examining the prize, Mason came by.

"Well, now you have got a prize. That is one of our little white-headed sparrows," he said.

At that instant a small bird, apparently the owner of the nest, flew by and lighted close to where the boys were. John could see that it was a small sparrow-like bird, with alternate white and black stripes down its head.

"Why, that is what Allie calls the white-crowned sparrow," he said. "It lives here in Labrador, and is one of the most common of small birds."

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"You ought to hear it sing," said Mason.

Just then Allie's gun was heard, and a moment later Allie himself came running to where Mason and John were, with a tremendously large bird in his hands, struggling fiercely the while.

"I shot him all myself, boys," he shouted.

"Well, you've got an old saddler now," said Mason. "Bring it here, let's kill him first."

The wounded bird was soon put out of its misery, and then laid down and stretched out upon the grass. It was an immense bird of the gull tribe, and had an entirely white plumage, excepting that the back and wings above were pure bluish black. It measured somewhat over four feet from tip to tip, and was the most beautiful specimen they had yet seen.

"Oh, what a beauty!" and Allie fairly danced with pleasure, as he viewed the magnificent bird. "I'll stuff him for Eva," said he.

"Yes; and she can take the old house off from her paper-rack, and you can mount him on that," added John. "But what has Freddie got? See, here he comes."

On came Freddie, with a huge object dangling upon a stick over his shoulder.

"See what I've got, boys," he shouted, at the same time displaying the object, by lifting the stick from his shoulder. "See him; there's more here, too."

"Why, it's a lobster; as sure as I'm alive," and Jack, who spoke, whistled a little snatch of a most curious song, which he said meant "a dozen more at low tide."

At this all hands laughed heartily, and then, taking up their burdens, hastened to deposit them in the boat. Jack emptied his bucket, which was full of eggs, in the

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bailing bucket of the boat; John placed his nests in the cuddy, and Allie placed his bird on a thwart with the others; then he carefully plugged their mouths and nostrils with cotton, wiped the blood and water from them, and left them to dry. All hands now started off once more, for eggs, and soon the pails were filled with every variety that could be found upon the island. Several very perfect sets of eider ducks' eggs, with their beautiful downy nests, were kept separate from the others, as were also those of several gulls, of each of the three species found on the island: the herring gull; the glaucus, ice, or burgomaster gull; and the great black backed gull, or coffin-carrier. Several sets of pigeon or black guillemots' eggs were found; and in the grass near a little pond were discovered the nest and eggs of a "shell bird," as Mason called it, or shell drake. Thus loaded, with their buckets full of all sorts of varieties of eggs, the boys once more started for the boat, where they left their burdens, and then, with botany can and collecting bottles, started to see what fresh specimens they could secure.

"I declare," said John, sitting down on top of a large, flat stone, "I'm tired already."

"I guess we all are," added Allie. "I'm as tired as if I'd been tramping all day, or digging a railroad, and I don't believe it is anywhere near noon yet."

John looked at his watch, and reported it as "only a quarter of eleven."

"Let's have a lunch," said Mason.

"What have we got to eat?" asked Allie.

"Oh, you boys make a fire, and I'll quickly get you enough to eat."

The boys set to in a hurry, even Freddie helping to

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collect wood for the fire. For this purpose each followed the line of the shore for drift-wood — there being apparently no other on the island — and soon all were returning with enough to boil the can — the can being nothing else than the tin bailing bucket of the boat, full of salt water.

"Now where are the matches?" asked Mason. Everybody looked at everybody else in perfect amazement. Of course nobody had any.

Mason went to the boat again, and, after fumbling for some time in the cuddy, produced a small match safe, wrapped in oil-cloth, to keep it waterproof, from which he extracted several, and then re-wrapping the bundle, put it back in the cuddy.

"All right, boys; here's for the fire!" shouted Mason.

In a moment a good blazing fire was crackling and curling up towards the sky, or rather towards the bottom of the tin bailing bucket, which was filled with water, containing half a dozen auks' eggs, and tied to a stick, the two ends of which Allie and Freddie were holding.

"Oh, my; how hot it is!" cried Allie. "John, come and take my end for a few minutes, do."

"And Jack, come and take mine, will you?" put in Freddie.

A moment later, and both John and Jack were as eagerly crying for Allie and Freddie to come and take the stick again. So it continued until the pot boiled, and the eggs were "hard enough to cut," as Mason said.

The boys had no butter or salt for their eggs, but they tasted "just as good as if there were all the fixings on them that we ever have," said Freddie.

"Yes, and a great deal better," added Mason.

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"What is it about fames bene condensum est?" asked Allie.

"Oh, dear," laughed John, "if you ever go to college, Allie, I guess you'll take the Latin prize. Condimentum est, you mean."

"Oh, yes, that's it; 'fames bene condimentum est,' or beans are a famous condiment," Allie replied.

"Where are the beans?" asked Freddie, very innocently, looking up from his egg.

"You don't know beans, I guess," said Jack.

"How do you like your eggs?" asked Mason.

"They're splendid; I wish we had some more, and that it was dinner time," said Allie.

"You can have as many of them as you like; they are all around you," and Mason laughed heartily at his own sally.

It now became necessary for the boys to start, if they expected to do any further exploring before noon, or rather before afternoon, as, in these latitudes, it was observed that the greatest heat, during the day, was not directly at noon, but at some time between one and two o'clock. The reason for this, the boys had, as yet, failed to ascertain; since the professor, whom they had asked, had put them off with a "hunt it out for yourselves in your physical geographies." Jack Ready, when the boys were talking the matter over between them, insisted that it must have been so arranged to give the Esquimaux the proper time between breakfast and dinner, since they got up so late mornings. Freddie said that he guessed that the reason was, that they were so far north that the sun didn't get time to get there by noon.

While the boys were thus chatting on about the mysterious reasons for the difference in temperature between

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the different latitudes, they were gathering together their collecting implements, and they now started on with renewed zeal.

"What are all these little things on the rocks?" asked Freddie. "See; they are old and broken. Here is a fresh one, just broken; but all the insides are gone."

"The gulls leave them," said Jack.

"Gulls!" exclaimed Allie. "How do they do that?"

"Why, they eat them," said Mason. "They dive down, from a great height, and pick them up, then fly away up in the air with them, and then let them drop; the distance is so great that the shell is broken; then the gull alights and eats the contents."

"How strange!" exclaimed all the boys.

At that moment a large gull arose from near where the boys were, and flew lazily off.

"Come, let's see where he came from," cried Allie; and off they were in a minute to the spot.

"Here's one that that gull had just been eating," continued Allie.

Sure enough, there were the remnants of a large, fresh animal that the gull had evidently just been feeding upon.

"What are they, anyway?" said Allie.

"They are called echini, or sea urchin," replied John, acting for once as a professor, "because the Latin echinus means a hedgehog. When rolled up, with all its spines bristling out, it looks like one of these animals."

The specimen was of a green color, covered completely, save a small spot beneath, with long, sharp spines. The boys saved two or three fine large specimens, and then continued their search.

Meanwhile, the botany can was fast being filled with

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plants, and John had filled a small can with seaweeds of various kinds, which he intended mounting and arranging on cards, when he should reach home.

Just then a sharp, shrill screech announced that Jack had fired his revolver at something.

"Oh, come quick!" he cried; "I've hit him! Where's the boat?"

"You've hit what?" said Mason, who happened to be near by.

"A seal!" replied Jack.

"I don't believe that you hurt him much," laughed Mason.

"Yes, I did; I sunk him."

"No doubt about that," again laughed Mason. "See, there he is laughing at you."

At that moment the seal raised his head from the water, this time somewhat nearer in towards shore, and showing a sleek black head, with eyes almost human, turned it slowly from side to side as he surveyed the prospect on either side of him.

"Keep perfectly still, now," whispered Mason. "There he dives. Follow me and do as I do."

Mason ran along the shore to a ledge of rocks, quite near to the water, and then crouched behind it. Then, telling the boys to be cautious and only to show the tops of their heads, he got up and threw himself at full length upon the rock. A moment more and the seal reappeared. Then Mason began a queer sort of a noise, resembling a deep hollow sounding of the word wow-wow-wow, uttered several times, somewhat like the barking of a dog. The seal took a long look and ducked his head again; in a minute he reappeared, this time several rods nearer the boys. In this way the animal was fairly tolled almost

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up to a large rock, just a little way from shore, in the water.

"Now," whispered Mason, "if I had a good rifle I might kill him."

Arriving here, the seal took a long look about him, and then dived again.

"All up now," cried Mason, springing up.

"Where's he gone to?" said all the boys at once.

"Way out to sea, with a long dive," replied Mason.

True enough. About ten minutes after, and the seal's head could just be distinguished way out in the distance, half a mile at sea. Jack fired a parting shot at him, and afterwards was heartily laughed at for having "sunk a seal" with a small twenty-two bore revolver.

As it was now noon in earnest, the boys returned to the boat, made a fire, drew out the luncheon, cooked more eggs, and sat down to a regular feast.

The boys had hardly sat down, before Mason grasped Allie's shot-gun, and started off for a point of rocks near the water, a little distance off. A moment later a sharp crack was heard, and he came running back to the boat, and, calling to Allie to jump in, he hastily pushed off and then got in himself. Taking an oar, he sculled the boat around the point, and soon picked up two dead ducks, which he had shot from a small flock which he had seen about to pass that way when he ran away with Allie's gun.

"Hurrah, boys!" shouted Allie, from the point. "Put on more wood; roast duck for dinner."

He was answered by a cheer, and soon the fire was roaring and crackling in a great style.

Before the boat had reached shore, Allie had thrown the ducks to Jack, and he and Freddie had them picked

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and cleaned in a trice. Mason then spitted them, and hung them over the fire to roast, and soon they were sputtering away almost equal to the spruce fire beneath them.

"This is what I call fun," said John, warming his hands over the genial blaze. "It beats Robinson Crusoe all hollow."

"Yes, we can get home if we want to, and he couldn't." put in Freddie.

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CHAPTER VIII.

AN UNEXPECTED SPECIMEN.

THE island on which the boys were encamped was not large, though it was rather high. It stood some distance out to sea, from the main coast; yet it was connected at low tide, by a sand bar, to a rocky point of land that stretched out, with a similar bar, to meet it. A simple, small channel of water only divided the two bars of sand. On the north and west side of the island the low beach was almost clear sand, sloping gradually. Above, the sand was overgrown with grasses and a few flowers. Still farther up came a huge mass of rocks, piled hither and thither, in all possible confusion. On the right, a high eminence presented almost perpendicular cliffs, on the south, to the very water's edge. At dead-low tide, the boys could wade around this, but only then.

On the southeast and east the land sloped to the water, but was everywhere rocks, with little or no sand; these rocks extended a long distance into the water, in several distinct reefs. Between these points of rocks were channels of deep water. From the west these ridges of rock grew gradually, each higher than the other, till they finally ran into the rocky shore, close in toward the island, on the northeast.

The boys had established themselves by a large angular rock, just north and at the base of the highest portion

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of the island. Here they had made their fire, and here they were seated, quietly enjoying their noon meal, quite uninterruptedly.

"Well, boys!" exclaimed Jack; "have you done enough for to-day?"

"Done enough! Why, Jack, we haven't but just begun!" said Allie. "I heard Freddie say something, only a minute ago, about beginning all over again; didn't you, Freddie?"

"I said that I would like to begin all over again. It's like reading a nice book. I always like to read it two or three times."

"Perhaps you do," said Jack; "but I always like to take another, and then find that the last was better than the first. So now I'd like best to find some new excitement."

"I'd just like to see a herd of seal, as Mason tells about," said John.

"While you are all expressing your opinions," Mason added, "I'll express mine by going to work under these rocks, and seeing how many lobsters I can find underneath them. I'd like to take home a good mess, first rate!"

"What! find lobsters under these rocks?" asked Freddie; "how do you do it?"

"I'll soon show you how."

And Mason went to the boat again, took from the cuddy a large cod hook and some stout twine, and returned to the rocks. Then he walked along the shore, for quite a distance, until he had found a large, slender pole; this too he returned with, then he sat down, and, with his knife, whittled a groove in the small end of the pole, on the side. Placing the hook in this groove, the

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point away from the rest of the stick, he proceeded, by means of the twine, to lash it firmly to the stick.

"Here, I guess that will stay!" he exclaimed. "That makes quite a gaff!"

"What's a gaff?" asked Freddie.

"Why, this is one; a stick with a hook in it?"

"Yes! but I thought they called a harpoon a gaff," said Allie.

"So they do!" replied Mason. "All such instruments for spearing or hooking anything with, the sailors call by that name."

"But a gaff topsail don't spear or hook anything," persisted Freddie.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Mason. "Are all the boys in the States like you? for if they are there's no wonder that they all turn out such good business men."

Freddie looked bewildered, for a moment; but the good-natured laugh, raised thus at his expense, cheered him for the moment.

"I do believe that if Freddie was wrecked, his first question would be, why the ship did not flounder, instead of going to pieces," whispered Jack.

"Flounder!" cried Freddie. "Yes, let's get some! I saw a lot of them off the wharf, this morning; they are splendid to eat."

Another ringing laugh so thoroughly disconcerted the poor boy, that, for a wonder, he kept still for the next half hour and did not speak even to Allie.

"Well! what shall we do now, boys?" said Jack.

"I'm going lobstering, for one!" exclaimed Mason.

"Then we will all go," said John and Allie.

The boys, then, following Mason's example and advice, began to roll up the legs of their pantaloons, as far as

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they would permit, and then marched, in procession, to the base of the cliff and out into the shallow water among the rocks.

It was slippery walking.

The shore was everywhere lined with round and sharp-cornered rocks, large and small, strewn about the beach, and these were covered over with thick, matted seaweed, or slippery kelp.

The tide had receded, leaving only pools of water here and there, deepest near the north side of the larger rocks, where the water had scooped or washed out the sand, leaving small, deep pools, which continued often under the rocks. Sometimes kelp or seaweeds grew abundantly in and about these places, as well as on the rocks around them.

The boys waded right into the water, and were soon, knee-deep, hunting about as industriously as if they were in the business, for the lobsters that Mason had promised them would be found so abundantly.

At first they met with no success, and even Mason, with his gaff, which he plied industriously beneath the rocks, failed to find anything.

"Well! this begins to look kinder empty!" said Mason. "I see some larger rocks on a little farther, there; I am going to try them. You boys stay here and look again under some of these rocks, to be sure that there are none here, and if I find any I will let you know!"

Mason winked slyly to Jack, and presently both boys were seen, wending their way towards the rocks in question.

Just at that moment, Freddie stepped on a large piece of slippery kelp, and, with a sudden splash, which caused all the boys to look around, he went down on his

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hands and knees into a great pool of water, in which he had been hunting for a small crab, which he had seen there a moment before. A sputter and a gagging noise apprised the boys that the bather had probably tasted salt water, and that he probably did not like it.

A moment later, and a more forlorn looking object than that which approached the beach could hardly be possible.

Freddie took off his clothes and hung them over a large rock, in the sun, to dry.

"I tell you!" he exclaimed. "Now that I have begun, I'm going to finish the whole job."

Having undressed, Freddie ran a short distance along the beach, to where the water was somewhat deeper, just off a low shelf of rocks, which jutted into the sea, and jumped in.

There was a grand plunge, this time, and then a splashing of the water equal to that which would be caused by some immense sea-monster, and the bather issued from the water, shivering from head to foot.

"Ough-ugh-ugh!" sputtered Fred.

"Was it cold?" exclaimed Allie, with evident interest, as he was standing near by with his coat and jacket off, already prepared, if everything was favorable, to follow suit.

"Cold! ough-ugh-ugh!" shivered Freddie. "Try it!"

"No! I've no desire to, whatever, now," said Allie, putting on his jacket again.

"I'll never do it again, unless I have to," said Freddie. "Oh, dear! I thought I'd never get on shore again, and I did not swim a single stroke, either."

A loud call from John here interrupted the conversation. It was quickly followed by another.

"I've got him! come, quick!"

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Allie hurried to his brother, while Freddie hastened to dry himself, and put on the remaining dry clothes that he had, for fear of taking cold; he then hastened to where the other two boys were.

John had really made a find. He had taken three large lobsters, out of one hole, beneath a very large rock, and was fishing away, with a small stick, for the fourth, which he declared was there, "because he has bitten the stick twice."

If the lobster was there, he refused to come out, for no amount of poking would dislodge him, so John was obliged to be content with three.

"Well! that's a good beginning, boys," he exclaimed. "I'm going to try it again. Here, Allie! you take these on shore for me."

Allie took the three up carefully, and carried them quite a distance up the beach and left them there, near a large rock, while he ran back again, to help John find some more.

"What luck, John?" he cried.

"Nothing yet," answered John.

"Here's one," called out Freddie. "Come, quick, he's going under this big rock."

Allie ran to the place indicated, and was just in time to secure a large fellow that was making fast time for beneath a good-sized rock near by.

"That makes four, anyway," said Allie.

"Let's go on the top of the cliff," said Freddie; "I'm tired of this."

"I should think you would be," replied Allie. "Ain't your clothes dry by this time?"

"I guess they are! I'm going to put them on, anyway."

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And suiting the action to the word, Freddie dressed himself again, and found his clothes, from lying in the hot sun, really quite dry.

"There, that feels better; now I'm ready to go! Come along!"

And together the two boys ascended the hill, picking their way along, slowly, over the rough, rocky pathway.

"There, if that don't pay for all the trouble of climbing, I don't know what does!" exclaimed Allie, who was some steps in advance of his brother.

"Oh, Allie! isn't it perfectly beautiful!" cried Fred, in a transport of delight.

It was really a most lovely scene that spread itself before the eager eyes of the two boys. Several low islands near them, rocky or slightly covered with vegetation, and the boundless horizon in the distance, everywhere water. Far to the left, several faint white sails, like sea gulls on noiseless wing, glided along with full sail and fair wind. Farther still, the occasional gleam of other sails was to be seen. One large fishing vessel, off to the right, was making for the very harbor where, back of them, snugly reposed the *North Star*, whose topmast and flag could still be seen. On the distant right, a long line of low, dense smoke hung on the horizon, where some steamer, probably coming from or going to Quebec or Montreal, had recently passed. Above, the sun shone, from an almost unclouded sky, with attenuate shade of dark or light, as some fleecy vail of gossamer floated gently past, beneath its rays.

"Let's draw it, Allie!"

"Oh, draw it! Freddie, why, you couldn't!"

"But you could, Allie, *you* draw!"

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"I wouldn't dare try. Keep still! Freddie, see what is that big black thing down there! Now it's gone! There it is again. See, see; it's a whale! Look!"

Freddie followed the direction of Allie's finger, and exclaimed:

"Oh, there it is! I see it. And there's another; see, quick!"

There were indeed two immense fellows, sporting in the water just a little way from the island, one some distance farther out to sea than the other. It was the second one of these two monsters of the deep that attracted the especial attention of the boys.

"See him. There he is. See how near shore he is coming!" cried Allie.

The whale, or rather grampus, for it was one of the latter species, — called by the fishermen "herring hog," from the fact that their presence generally indicates a school of these fish, upon which the huge animal feeds, — was now close in shore, and approaching still nearer at each rise.

The black monster would appear at the surface with a loud puff — as the air escaped through its blow holes — and lazily roll back into the water, displaying in its descent nearly or quite the entire surface of his back; after a few moments another loud puff — which the boys could distinctly hear, even at their distance from him, and the animal would go through a similar movement as it progressed through the water.

"How close he is to that small island, just outside the one that we are on," said Allie.

"Now he has disappeared," cried Freddie. "No! he is going back again."

The grampus had evidently gone far enough in one

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direction, and had now turned and was retracing his way toward the farther end of the island in question.

"I wonder if the boys have seen him yet?" asked Freddie.

"Oh, no! they can't. Don't you see that he's behind the island?"

"If he goes beyond the point, can't they see him?"

"Of course they can, and there he goes. I wish we could make the boys look up."

Freddie picked up a stone, and threw it with all his might in the direction of Mason and Jack.

"I hope it won't hit them!"

"No fear of that," said Allie.

Freddie looked amazed, as the stone that he had fired fell behind the cliff, and he could not even see it as it struck the water at the foot of the rocks.

"The cliff must be a great deal higher than we imagine," said Allie. "Now I'll try it."

Allie met with no better success than his brother had, and the stone fell into the water entirely out of sight of the boys.

"I guess we'd better give up trying to attract them; but see, the whale has passed the island. The boys see him! There he goes!" and Freddie fairly danced with pleasure.

By this time the grampus had passed from behind the island into full view of all in the cove. Suddenly he disappeared.

"Where can he have gone, Allie?"

"I don't know, but I guess he has gone to sea."

"What fun if he would run on to the rocks, near here, somewhere, where we could see him."

"I wish he would. I never saw so big an animal, so near too, before, anyway."

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"Isn't he an immense fish, Allie?"

"Whales are not fishes, Freddie. I know enough about Natural History to know that, anyway."

"Well, what are they then?"

"Why, they are animals; they belong to a class by themselves, and are called Cetaceans."

"Oh, my! I wish I knew all about these things," sighed Freddie.

"I don't know much about them, but I know a little," said Allie.

"There's the whale, again; he's coming right in toward shore."

As he re-appeared upon the surface, both boys saw, at once, that he was, in reality, headed directly toward the shore, or rather the rocky reefs, on the northeast of the island, and inside the small outer island.

"Why, he's just inside the point, Allie! how can he go on without running right on to the rocks? He's going to turn. No! there he goes right on."

The whale had by this time neared the outer of the three reef points of rock, on this side of the island, and was fast approaching it. There was water enough over this reef, so that he could completely pass it, even at lower tide than it was then.

A few moments more, and the whale was safely over this reef, and sporting and blowing in the water beyond. If he had remained in this position he could easily have turned and retraced his way back again. This the boys supposed that he would do; but the whale had no such notion. The fish that he was pursuing, had, doubtless, gone on ahead of him, and, passing safely once the high and dangerous second reef, into the deep water beyond, lay tempting his senses to the desperate feat of following.

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The scene had now become intensely exciting. The boys, below the cliff, had left off their work of lobster catching, and now stood upon a high rock watching, with as much interest as the boys above.

Presently there was a great splashing in the water.

"There he is on the reef!" cried Freddie, almost in a whisper.

"No, no! not yet," said Allie.

"I guess he hit his nose on a rock; and it must have hurt him, by the splashing that he makes."

"Perhaps he slipped on the kelp!" said Allie, laughing.

Freddie looked rather red for a moment; but returned the sally with wonderful effect.

"Or perhaps he went lobster hunting, and didn't find any," he returned.

It was now Allie's turn to look rather foolish; but the whale drew his attention again, so that it did not last long.

"I wish the boys would come up here, Allie. I'm going to try firing at them."

The word firing reminded Allie that he had his revolver in his pocket, and, taking it out, he fired a charge into the water over the heads of the boys below.

The sound of the shot attracted their attention, and seeing Freddie and Allie on the top of the rocks, waving to them, they soon scrambled up the other side of the hill, and, in a moment more, all five boys stood together on the summit of the cliff.

"Where are your lobsters?" asked Freddie, the moment the boys had gained the top.

"Oh, we left them on the beach," said John.

"Won't they walk off?"

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"I guess not! we don't care if they do, we can get some more, and it isn't every day we can get a chance to see a whale run on the rocks."

"Do you think that he will do that?" asked Allie.

"Mason says so!" replied John. "He says that they frequently run on to the rocks here, while following the herring, and that he thinks this one will get caught on the reef. The tide is going out fast, and will soon catch him, if he does not get out of the basin there."

Meanwhile the whale had pursued the herring to the very edge of the reef. The water was still deep enough over the center of the reef to admit the passage of the animal. At this moment the whale approached the reef at the same time with an immense wave, that made the water several feet deeper over the rocks, and in a moment more it was safely over the barrier, and in deep water beyond.

"There! he's over safely," said Freddie.

A shout from Mason was the only reply.

"Over safely!" exclaimed Jack. "I guess he is. He's safe for twenty barrels of oil, at sixteen dollars a barrel."

Such, in fact, was the case. The whale was now inside the rocks which girt the shore line, and there was no way for him to get back, excepting by the way he had come. This way was now gradually closing, by the continuous fall of the tide, so that the water in which the whale was, formed a sort of a pond, with a chain of rocks extending from the island to the main shore on one side, and the sand beach of the land and island on the other. A rippling of the water over the reef, and the herring passed out safely into the sea again, leaving the whale a prisoner in his own trap.

"Hooray!" shouted Mason. "Come on, hurry up!"

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"Where to?" asked Allie.

"Home, to get the men," said Mason, already half-way down the hill towards the boat.

Jack rushed down to the beach on the opposite side, and was soon seen picking his way around the base of the cliff with a large string of lobsters, hanging from a stick, which he held balanced over his shoulders. Arriving at the boat nearly as soon as the others were prepared to shove her off, he jumped in, and in a moment the boat was spinning towards home.

It took but a comparatively short time to reach the landing, for which place Mason steered direct, and to tie the boat, while all hands jumped out at once. — Mason started after the men, while the boys unloaded their treasures and carried them up to the house. Mrs. McIntyre at once put the big pot on the stove and filled it with water, then she put into it as many lobsters as it would hold, and weighted the cover down with heavy stones.

"Now, Mary!" said Mrs. McIntyre, "if you will tend the pot, while you do your ironing, I'll go out and help the men trim the fish."

"Twenty minutes after the water boils!" called the little woman, as she bustled off out of the house, and down the hill to where the men were busy trimming the fish.

"Mason says that there's a whale stranded over to Prestile!" shouted Mr. McIntyre, as his wife put in an appearance at the fish-flaker.

"Where are the boys! All hands lively now, and we're good for thirty barrels of oil before the end of the month."

The sound was like electricity. The fish were trimmed

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in half an hour, when usually it took two hours with nearly the same force, and, leaving Mrs. McIntyre to trim the last of the fat, all hands ran to the boats.

Mr. McIntyre soon came down from the shed, and joined them with a couple of old rusty harpoons, and a stout coil of rope; these, with an axe, he threw into the boat, and was off again for some wood for stakes, and when all was ready the boat shoved off once more for the island.

The men had taken the sail-boat, so the boys took the row-boat and followed in it.

It was now nearly three in the afternoon, and, as the nights were long, the men had plenty of time to secure their prize before the turn of the tide.

On reaching the island, the boats were fastened, and the men jumped ashore and ran eagerly around the point. There, sure enough, lay the immense animal, fully aground on the rocks near the end of the sand beach and still struggling feebly to escape; but it was impossible. The men set up a shout, and rushed at once for the beach upon which the whale had stranded. The tide was now so low that they could approach to within a few yards of the monster. The men did not mind the water, however, but rushed at once up to the animal and began to send their harpoons into him. One was put near his head and the other near his tail, and driven deep into the mass of fat that formed the external coat. When this had been accomplished, the ropes were fastened about the head of each harpoon and drawn in towards the shore. Here two stakes with notches in them, were driven firmly into the ground, opposite the head of the harpoons, and the ropes fastened tightly to them. Thus was the monster secured.

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The harpoon near the head of the animal had evidently struck some vital point, for the blood soon began to flow freely from its mouth and nostrils. The huge tail would occasionally beat feebly upon the rocks, but this soon ceased, and with a few convulsive shivers the animal lay motionless.

"Well, boys, that's a good job done!" exclaimed Mr. McIntyre, wiping the perspiration from his brow with an immense bandana handkerchief.

"I — I — I should say so!" exclaimed one of the men, an immense fellow with brawny arms and a crop of short, bright red hair, that stood up all over the top of his head much as if an electric battery had been let loose upon that particular spot. "And — and does we go shares, sir, for him, or does you pay us extra? we didn't ship to go whaling."

Mr. McIntyre laughed, for he readily comprehended the fellow's meaning.

"Which shall it be, boys! shares or extra pay?"

For a few moments there was a confusion of voices; some were for shares and others for extra pay. Mr. McIntyre was a shrewd manager, and he saw, at once, that the huge animal before him was likely to yield even more oil than had been at first anticipated, so he said to the men:

"Well, boys! I don't mind a shilling a day more on the wages while we cut up and try out the blubber. If you would rather have the oil, you can, but you must furnish your own barrels, try-pots, and those things; I've got enough to do to find my own. Which shall it be?"

The men were quick enough to see the philosophy of "a bird in hand" being worth more than "two in the

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bush," and, knowing the impossibility of their ever being able to furnish the necessary articles for their work, they readily assented to the extra shilling, so the bargain was completed.

It was necessary, now, to post a watch, which in fact needed all hands, to haul upon the rope, as the tide came in, and draw the whale as much farther in toward the shore as it was possible to get him, as it would then be so much easier work cutting him to pieces. As it was impossible to draw such a huge mass ashore, the men could not work to advantage except at low tide. Mr. McIntyre sent Mason back to the house for supper for himself and the men, and then began collecting wood for a fire, as they would be obliged to remain out a part of the night, and it was already beginning to be dark and the air chilly.

Much as the boys wished to remain on the island, and watch the men, prudence forbade, and so all returned with Mason to the house.

By the time they reached home, supper was ready.

Mary had boiled the lobsters "to a T," and Mr. Ready had returned from the schooner with a can of peaches and another of pears, and also a large piece of bacon, which he presented to Mrs. McIntyre, and she had cut and fried several "rashers" for the table. The hot biscuits were well browned, and done completely through; so that, altogether, there was quite a display of good things for the hungry crowd that assembled, about half an hour later, to partake of the good cheer provided.

"Well, boys!" said Mr. Benton, "have you had a good time to-day?"

"Oh, yes, sir!" cried they all together.

"Bless their hearts," said Mrs. McIntyre, "no need to

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ask them such a question. Look at their faces, they are surely too sunburnt, and dirty, and tired to leave any doubt, — eh, dears?" said the good lady. "Mary, don't fetch the milk when there's lobsters on the table," she continued. "Now, put the pitcher down, put on a clean apron, and come and sit down at the table with the folks, for once-t."

Mary did as she was bid, and the meal passed off socially and very pleasantly. In the evening they had more playing and singing, and the company chatted together until nearly nine o'clock, when once again it was bed-time, and all sought their rooms for the night.

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CHAPTER IX.

HOW THE BOYS PRESERVED THEIR SPECIMENS.

AS the following day was Saturday, Mr. Ready consented, at the desire of all the party, to remain where they were that day and the next, and then start, bright and early, if the wind were favorable, for the voyage down along the coast.

The boys hailed this decision with pleasure, as it would thus give them a chance to skin their birds, and also to prepare the other specimens which they had taken the day before, and which lay about "cluttering up" Mrs. McIntyre's house and doorway.

"I'm going to spend all the day," said Freddie, "in blowing eggs. I'm going to blow all that we have got."

"Don't blow away," laughed Allie, who, nevertheless, fully approved of his brother's scheme, and who intended to accomplish fully as much though in a somewhat different line.

"Don't be afraid of that," returned Freddie; "but what are you going to do?"

"Oh, I've got about twenty birds to skin. Do you think I can do it?"

"Oh, dear, no; not all alone."

"I'm going to teach Jack to skin, and he's going to help me; and then John, when he has pressed his flowers and finished his work, will help me; so I guess we will get through with the work together, somehow."

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"If we do all we want to do, how busy we shall be," said Freddie.

Here Mason came around to say that the men had already gone to begin work on the whale, and that the boys could go over with him, if they wished, to the island. It was a great temptation, but there was too much at stake to run the risk, and so Mason started alone, and the boys began to prepare for their work. They had hardly begun, however, before breakfast was announced, and a good meal of broiled cod, boiled eggs, and hot coffee, was set forth for all.

"I declare, Mrs. McIntyre, it is worth coming way to Labrador for such a meal as this," said Mr. Taylor; "if we only had an old-fashioned Johnny-cake, such as my mother used to make, this would be the best breakfast I had tasted for twenty years."

"My sakes alive!" exclaimed Mrs. McIntyre. "Mary, Mary! open the oven door, quick!"

Mary opened the oven door, and straightway there issued forth such a smell and smoke, as might have come from a small-sized charcoal pit.

"Mercy me!" put in the good woman, "if biling them eggs didn't put the oven entirely out of my head. It's perfectly scand'lous. If your mother'd made such a thing as this, she'd know enough not to tell on it, and that's more than I know."

The smoke was now cleared off, so that Mary was able to draw from the oven a huge panful of something that was burned to a crisp. It proved to be a panful of corn-meal cakes, and it was indeed a sorry-looking affair.

"Why, mother!" exclaimed Mary, "it's only burned on the top."

"Take a knife and scrape it then," said her mother.

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A loud rasping noise was then heard, which continued for some minutes.

"I guess that will do, and be none the worse for its scorching, after all," said Mary, as she placed on the table two large platefuls of corn bread, rather dark-colored on top and bottom, but evidently good within.

"Now, Mr. Taylor, 'twould have been scand'lous if your mother hadn't done the thing in a little better shape than that; but if it isn't good, you needn't eat it; that's all."

After delivering this piece of information, or rather this assertion, Mrs. McIntyre proceeded to pour out a cup of hot coffee for Mr. Benton.

"And how did you pass the day, yesterday?" she asked. "You must give an account of yourselves."

Each one then told how he had passed the day. Mr. Benton had remained home, or near the house, all day, resting after the rough voyage; Mr. Taylor and Mr. Furness had been out fishing for trout, and caught a fine string, in a brook that tumbled down from the neighboring hills, with a single large fellow that turned the scales at four pounds and three ounces; Mr. Jacobs had been botanizing, and had brought home a box full of rare plants, while Mr. Murphy had smoked his meerschaum, and wandered aimlessly about among the men, as they were engaged in their fish work, prying here and there, into barrels and puncheons, and looking into everything that he came across.

"*He* don't seem to have done much," put in John, "but he's the cutest of the party, I think. I guess he's writing a book on the subject."

Mr. Murphy turned rather red at this, on John's unconsciously telling of his real thoughts.

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"When you catch *me* writing a book," said Mr. Murphy, "just let me know it, will you? It will be because there's nothing else to do, I guess."

"Oh! you can help me blow eggs, if you really want something to do," said Freddie, who began to show signs of weakening already on the stint that he had given himself.

"Thank you just the same," returned Mr. Murphy, "at present I prefer another cup of coffee, and more corn cake."

These having been passed, no more was said by any one at the table for full five minutes.

At length they were all finished, when they arose, each to go his way for the morning.

Mrs. McIntyre said that "the boys often blows their eggs, and we uses the inside just the same, Master Benton. So, if you had just as soon, Mary will give you a bowl, and you can save the insides of your eggs."

Freddie readily agreed to this, and soon was seated comfortably on the door-step, with several huge buckets of eggs near him.

"Which shall I begin on first, Allie?"

Allie was busy arranging him a table, just inside of the porch, upon which to do the work of skinning his birds, which he had all carefully arranged on the floor near by.

"Oh, take the sets first; I would."

Freddie then procured another empty bucket, into which he put the loose top eggs, until he came to the sets which he took out carefully and arranged in order, close by on the grass. He then procured from his bag a small blow-pipe, with a curved end and very small tip, and an egg-drill, — the latter, a small steel instrument

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much like some dentist's tool, with a conical, file-like tip; with these he first drilled a small, round hole in the side of the egg, and then inserting the blow-pipe, with the hole in the egg downward over the bowl, he blew through the end of the pipe. The hole in the egg being larger than the end of the blow-pipe, the contents came out with a rush, as the breath forced it out, from around the sides of the pipe and fell into the bowl. In this way the egg was soon blown, and then a mouthful of water, blown in in the same way and shaken up well, thoroughly rinsed the inside. This was blown out on the ground, and the egg carefully laid, holes down, on some blotting-paper, bought for the purpose, to drain and dry. After a few trials, Freddie found that the drill and blow-pipe were too small to use well, so he returned to his valise and procured some larger ones; with these he was able to proceed much more rapidly, and could easily clean three in five minutes.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Freddie. "I'm busy for all day, I guess; all the morning, anyway."

Meanwhile Allie had arranged his table and brought out his skinning tools, and sat down to work. His instruments were a large and a small knife, — or scalpel, as they were called; a large and a small pair of scissors; a pair of pincers, and several small wires and pieces of wood. He also had a box of fine, white Indian meal, another of plaster of paris, and a third of arsenic with which to poison the skin when it had been made. A bundle of tow also lay beneath the table. These things were arranged on the table on a large newspaper, and then Allie was all ready to begin work.

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The first bird that he began with was the large Great Black-backed Gull. He handled it carefully, either by the bill or by the feet, so that the plumage would not get greasy or dirty from his touch, and laid it, having smoothed down the feathers, upon the table, feet toward him and with the head turned so that the bill pointed to the left. Then he filled the mouth and nostrils with small wads of tow, to prevent the blood and mucous from escaping upon the feathers. With a little water he first wet, then carefully scraped off with his knife several patches of blood, which had found its way, already, upon the feathers of the breast, and dried them by powdering plaster of paris upon the place and dusting it off with a small paint brush. Several applications removed every trace of a stain, and the clear white feathers became as good as new. It was a beautiful skin; there was hardly a stain upon it. Allie meant to mount it for his mother.

After all this had been done, Allie took the smaller of the two knives and, carefully parting the feathers of the lower part of the breast, he cut the skin still more carefully, from the bottom of the breast-bone down to and through the vent. He was particular to cut the outer skin only, and not to break into the body where the intestines lay, as this would hinder him in his work. He then loosened and pushed the skin away from the flesh until the joint of the leg appeared, all the time sprinkling plenty of white meal over the cut places, to soak up any traces of blood or moisture that might be there, and prevent it from getting on the feathers; then he turned the skin of the leg to the second joint, and, cutting the tendons, scraped the bone bare to the first joint, where he cut a scissure, leaving the leg-

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bone on the skin. In a similar manner he treated the other leg; then carefully pushing the skin on each side, until he had freed it beneath the tail-bone, he cut this off, and carefully removed the flesh, both above and below this bone.

As the bird was a large one, it was now necessary to proceed somewhat differently from what he would have done with a smaller specimen. From his instrument case he procured a couple of fish hooks, of moderate size, from which the barbs had been filed off, and tied them tightly on either end of a stout piece of twine. One of these he hooked into the edge of the table, and the other into the bony part of the body of the bird, so that the latter hung downwards over the edge of the table. He now proceeded carefully to push back the skin, until he had reached the base of the wings; these he separated from the body at the joints. Pushing the skin still farther he reached the neck. Taking the hooks off now, he replaced the bird upon the table, with the body hanging over the edge, and grasping firmly hold of the bill he pushed back the skin of the neck to the skull and then drew it over. A three-cornered cut — one below and one on each side above, to a point just over the entrance to the brain, and a slight pull separated the body, and left the skull alone clear. Enlarging the opening slightly with his knife, he scooped out the brains with a small paddle-like piece of wood. Turning the skin still farther back, he pulled the skin out of the ear passage, without tearing it, and then cut the thin film over the eye, which he then scooped out with a piece of bent wire. A little scraping removed most of the rest of the fleshy parts, from about the skull and bill: the wings now alone remained to be skinned. It was easy work to remove

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the skin to the first joint, but Allie found that it was necessary to use the back of one of his knives, and fairly scrape the inner edge of the bone, to the second joint, before the feathers of the wing could be removed from the small grooved pits, into which they grew, on this part of the bone. He at length accomplished it, however, and scraped the meat carefully, on both wings, clear from the second joint to the top of the bone. Small strips of tow, wound around the bones, as also on the legs, made the parts as thick as they were before, and the whole skin was ready for the arsenic.

The poison was dusted carefully all over the skin, an extra amount put on the tail, and into the hollows of the skin around both legs and wings. A large amount was dusted about the base of the skull, and the neck and skin were thoroughly covered. A round wad of tow filled out each eye hole, to its proper place; and a small stick, whittled to fill the hole of the skull, was thus inserted and also filled the neck, about which portion it was wound with tow, so as almost to fill the skin. The head was then turned, the wings tied together; the whole shaken and dusted outside.

The skin was now nearly complete, but not quite. After the dirty papers had been removed, it was laid upon the table again, the wads of tow taken from the mouth and nostrils, the tongue removed, and the whole body filled plump with scraps of paper and some tow. A thin piece of tough paper was then bound around the center of the body, to keep the wings at the side; the bill was tied together at the nostrils; and the legs crossed and tied together at the joint. The bird was then as plump, well filled, and well prepared a skin,

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as would please anybody. Getting a little card tag from his box, Allie then wrote as follows:

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL.
Larus marinus, Linn.
HARRINGTON HARBOR, LABRADOR.
Collected by Allie Benton.

Bill yellow; red spot near tip of lower bill; legs and feet straw color; eye white; adult. Shot June 30, 1883. No. 210.

After all this had been done, and the tag fastened to one of the legs, Allie took his note-book, repeated all the remarks he had made, and added all that he could think of in regard to the habits of the bird, leaving space to add anything else that he might find worthy of note afterwards; then taking a newspaper, he laid the bird upon it, folded it carefully, doubled it over and pinned together the ends, with the bird's name upon the outside, and laid the package away on a shelf in the porch.

"There, our bird's done," said Allie, "at any rate, and I haven't been but a few minutes over an hour."

"Good," exclaimed Freddie, from the doorstep; "and I've got all the sets blown, and my bowl's so full I can hardly move it. Mary," he cried, "can't I have another bowl?"

"Why yes, dear; half a dozen of them," said Mary, bringing another, and taking away the one already full.

"I'm tired of blowing," said Freddie; "I'm going down to fish for flounders, and catch a mess for dinner," and the next minute he had disappeared down the slope.

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"I guess I'll do all my gulls, first," soliloquized Allie. "Here comes Jack to help me."

Jack and Allie were soon at work again, each with an immense gull.

"I've got the ice gull," said Allie.

"I wonder why they call it 'burgomaster'?" asked Jack.

"I guess it's because he is the chief amongst the gulls, and makes all the others stand around," replied Allie.

"Perhaps he's master of the iceberg," said Jack.

"Ain't he a handsome fellow, anyway!"

"What do you call this one?" said Jack.

"Oh, that is the mate to the one I did first, I think."

"But he is brown all over."

"Then it must be a young bird."

"Are the young birds always brown?"

"Yes, I believe they always have some brown on them."

"Then what are those other large gulls?"

"Those are the common gulls. We call them simply herring gulls. The males and females are both nearly alike in all these birds; the young alone are different. That almost black gull is the young of these almost pure white gulls."

"Let us hurry up," said Jack, "and see if we can get all the gulls done before dinner. See; there are eight of them, and it is now eight o'clock."

The boys put in their best work, and by one o'clock, when Mrs. McIntyre announced dinner, the gulls were all completed, and the nine birds carefully wrapped up, and laid out to dry. Freddie had, meanwhile, broken his fish line, and so returned to the egg-blowing again; while John, having put into press all his plants, has-

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tened to join the group and express his readiness to take his hand at skinning birds after dinner.

At length dinner was disposed of; then the afternoon's work soon began.

"Now let us see, boys," exclaimed Allie, as he with Jack and John pursued their way to the porch, which they had constituted their workroom; "here are the rest of the birds. We have here three razor-billed auks, four foolish guillemots — "

"We used to call them foolish Williams," said Jack. "The name starts off like the French for William."

"Well, here they are; and two pigeons or pigeon guillemots, with one young of the same. Then here are two puffins — look at the bill they have on them. There's the male eider duck, and there the two females."

"What's this bird?" picking up a large, black duck with white patches on the wings.

"Oh, that's a brass-winged diver," replied Jack.

"Why, let me see," exclaimed Allie, "we have this bird at home, and call it coot. We shoot it in the fall off the rocks at the Brant-rock. Yes, we call it white-winged coot to distinguish it from the real sea coot."

"We have the real sea coot here too," said Jack; "but we call that the bottle-nosed diver. Then there is one all black, that is the black diver."

"We call that the scoter duck," said Allie.

"Well, anyway, I'm going to skin this," said Jack, as he picked it out and laid it one side.

"Sixteen birds," counted Allie. "Oh, dear! Well, I guess we can do them all. We've got all the afternoon and all night to do them in. We did nine this morning."

The boys then went to work bravely at the task before them.

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Freddie, meanwhile, continued to blow eggs.

Mr. Benton lay down to take an afternoon nap.

Mr. Jacobs and Mr. Murphy strolled off toward the wharf, and were soon seen in the boat rowing for the island, probably to take a look at the whale; and Mr. Furness and Mr. Taylor started off for more flowers, lichens, and mosses.

"Well, Mary," exclaimed Mrs. McIntyre, as she stood with her sleeves rolled up, washing the dishes, "what shall we get for supper?"

Now Mrs. McIntyre was apt to ask this same question of Mary, about this same time quite regularly each day; and Mary was just as apt to say nothing, as she knew too well that her mother had made up her own mind as to what it should be.

"Did you say that the dried apples were all gone, Mary?" continued her mother.

"Oh, no, mother," replied Mary, still dutifully keeping up the apparent deception.

"Well, don't you think that some apple sauce would go well with hot biscuits?"

"Just the thing, mother. How good you are at contriving."

Mrs. McIntyre wiped her hands on the towel, smoothed her apron down, and then said:

"Well; suppose now that you find the apples and pick them over and set them to soak, while I finish the dishes."

Mary hurried off for the apples.

"What a comfort that child is," sighed Mrs. McIntyre. "What could I do without her. What a fine woman she will make! How well she planned that apple sauce for supper. I never could do nothing without her. She

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never shall marry that Ike Adams in this world. Drat him. He ain't worth his salt, much less his fish. He only caught a little over forty quintals last summer. Bill Jerkes caught over sixty himself, and he's clear gone on her, but she wouldn't stir her little finger to save him from drowning, and she sailed way down to Tub Island, all alone, herself, when that Adams sprained his ankle, just to carry him the arnica bottle. Laws sakes! It does beat everything! When *I* was a girl, your father and I had to marry, 'cause there wa'n't no other young fellers or young girls 'round within forty miles."

"What did you say, mother?" asked Mary, innocently enough, just then coming up the cellar stairs.

"Mind your work, you idle hussy!" said her mother.

Mary stared in perfect amazement, at being thus rudely answered, and in her surprise dropped the pan of apples all over the floor.

"There, you stupid thing," and Mrs. McIntyre flung her apron over her face, and sat down in the chair, and cried.

"What is it? What's the matter, mother?" exclaimed Mary in her most pitying tones, as she rushed up to her mother and put her arms around her neck.

"Do you see that boat over yonder?"

Mary's tone changed in an instant, as she turned and looked out of the window.

"Why, that's Ike Adams' boat."

"Well, you needn't tell me that; I know it."

"What's he coming to-day for?" said Mary.

"He's coming to ask your father — "

"Sh-sh, mother. He's coming to ask father if he can help cut up the whale. I'll go and tell him that they're over to the island," and away Mary went on her unselfish errand.

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"I shall have to pick over them apples myself," said Mrs. McIntyre. "Seems just as though I always had everything to do, and nobody to help me;" and the busy woman started about her work, by this time in a quite happy frame of mind.

At six o'clock came supper. Everybody was ready for it. Freddie had finished blowing one hundred and ninety-three eggs, and was, to use his own expression, "entirely blown out." Under Allie's guidance, only four of the birds remained to be skinned, — and these the four foolish Williams, as Jack still persisted in calling them. Mr. Furness and Mr. Taylor had returned with their boxes full of flowers, and of lichens, with a few mosses. Mr. Jacobs and Mr. Murphy had arrived from the island, and reported the work there on the whale as going on rapidly. Mr. Jacobs also brought back a large pailful of seaweeds, and some were most beautiful and delicate.

"I shall spend my evening mounting them," said he. "I think that I have a good many varieties."

Mr. Murphy had picked up a quantity of star-fish, and several of a species of holothurian, like the sea-cucumber, only they were red, and one of the fishermen, he said, called them sea-cherries. They were small, round, and red, and had a sort of bud on one end of them, from which they extended their feelers or tentacles, when in the water and undisturbed.

"Well, boys," said Mr. Benton, "I suppose you are all glad that to-morrow is Sunday?"

All heartily assented to this observation, as they sat down to supper.

"I hope the gentlemen will have enough to eat," said Mrs. McIntyre. "I can cook some eggs in a few minutes, if anybody would like them," she said.

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As no one seemed to wish anything else, the supper proceeded in silence.

When all were finished, the dishes cleared away, and all the work done, it was nearly eleven o'clock, while a more weary household, perhaps, never lay down to rest, —at least so it seemed to each one.

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CHAPTER X.

SUNDAY.

SUNDAY, at last! sweet, pleasant, Sunday. What a delight, and what a rest. The day opened with the sun shining clear and bright, — from almost unclouded sky, and a slight wind blowing from the southeast; so slight was the breeze that it barely ruffled the bosom of the calm water of the harbor, yet as they looked out of the door, all felt it on their cheeks, cool, balmy, and exhilarating.

"What a lovely day!" exclaimed Allie; "and it is Sunday, too — that's the best of it."

"We can rest, and won't have any church to go to," put in Freddie.

"What did you say about church?" asked a voice from inside, that the boys recognized to be that of Mrs. McIntyre.

"No church to go to, hey! does ye's think us to be all heathens, here? Well, we's not then."

"Where does the family go to church?" asked Mr. Benton.

"Oh, down to the Lamb Cove, here, about eight mile, sir!"

"And is there really a church there?" inquired Mr. Benton.

"Oh, certainly, sir! There's a fine building there, it has been there now for a dozen years, odd, sir; and we goes every pleasant Sunday, when the wind is right."

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"Is the wind right to-day?"

"Not just, sir!" said Mrs. McIntyre. "It's south-west, and we want to go in pretty near that direction."

"Do you think that anybody will go?"

"I can't just tell, sir, but the boys and their father might; it's not far, and a long tack and a short tack would bring them there in time for the service."

"What is the nature of the service?"

"Oh, 'tis Church of England, sir."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, sir! A regular minister is sent down every year, unless the same wishes to continue, as he often does, from Montreal or Quebec, — I can't just tell which, the boy will know — from the college there, sir; and he takes charge of the work for the year."

"Tell us more of this, good woman," said Mr. Benton.

"Oh, I can't, sir; but the boy will know. You see the minister has his headquarters at Lamb Cove. There, there is a big settlement, as many as thirty houses, and nearly one hundred and fifty peoples. They has, helped by the Canadian government, built a church and a parsonage there, and the minister, every so often, — once a month each way, sir, I believe — takes a trip, just to eastward, and then to westward, reads the service along at the houses where he comes, and baptizes the children."

"And so the people go to hear him at Lamb Cove?" asked Mr. Benton.

"Yes, sir! They often comes, of a good day, sir, from twenty miles each way. They all meets at Lamb Cove of a Sunday, and there we learn all the news."

"Oh, that's what you always go to church for," laughed Mr. Murphy, "to learn the news?"

"And we likes to know what our neighbors are doing,

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sir, as well as you folks in the States!" exclaimed Mrs. McIntyre, with considerable spirit.

"Oh, certainly," said Mr. Murphy, who felt that he was not quite understood. "I bit my own nose off that time," whispered he to Mr. Taylor, who was standing near.

"That's a spirited animal," said Mr. Taylor.

At this moment the billy goat, which, with all the other animals, had been turned out to feed upon the sward, in front of the house — rushed frantically across the lawn, in front of the door, and, lowering his head, gave the bull, which was feeding quietly on the other side of the lawn, a sudden and violent buck in the ribs.

"Do you refer to the lady or the goat?" whispered back Mr. Taylor, winking his eye very hard meanwhile at Mr. Murphy.

"Either you choose to make it!" quietly responded Mr. Murphy, with a faint chuckle.

"I'll take compassion on the one, and say the animal," said Mr. Taylor.

"Very spirited! yes, so I perceive. A little too much so for his own comfort and convenience," Mr. Murphy replied. "See for yourself!"

The attention of all was now turned to the bull, who had turned upon his assailant, and was literally driving him backwards, all over the ground.

"Why doesn't he toss him?" asked Freddie.

"He's young yet, and don't know that he is really big enough to, I suppose," answered Allie.

"Won't he hurt him?"

"Oh, no!" said Mason, who at that moment appeared in the doorway. "They often play together in that way for hours. I have stood and watched them, and laughed until I cried."

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"Which, Mason?" asked Freddie.

"Both," said Mason, good-humoredly.

It was, indeed, curious to watch the two animals maneuver.

"They plays together like children!" said Mrs. McIntyre, looking over the boys' shoulders. "I often wonders that the billy don't get hurted, but he never seems to have yet."

"Here comes father!" said Mason.

"Will ye go to the Cove to-day?" screamed Mrs. McIntyre, at the top of her voice; so loud, indeed, that Freddie ducked his head, suddenly, much to the amusement of the rest of the boys.

In a moment Mr. McIntyre had arrived within answering distance, and responded sharply:

"S'pose we might's well! Would some or all of you gentl'm'n like to go? Can all go! plenty room!"

All thought that they would like to go, and so hurried into the house, the more eagerly as they heard Mrs. McIntyre calling them to breakfast, to prepare for the sail, though there were several hours before them.

The breakfast consisted of the usual hot rolls, coffee, and boiled eggs, with the unusual course of ham and baked beans. It took the guests a long time to finish their breakfast that morning. Certainly no one, knowing the "bill of fare," would wonder for a moment at that.

After breakfast an hour's ramble about the house, then a few touches upon the toilet, and, at the announcement that the boat was at the wharf and Mr. McIntyre was ready for those who were going with him to church, all flocked to the landing.

"Here we are!" said Mr. Benton, "all ready to go any-

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where that you might please, — as long as this pleasant weather lasts."

"Get right in," replied Mr. McIntyre.

The boat was a large one, and there was plenty of room. It was one of the kind that the fishermen called "Yankee barges," and was very wide and deep for its length, and with five apartments or compartments, so that there were six seats, besides the two end pieces. The center partition contained the mainmast and was filled with huge rocks for ballast. Her foremast stood in the rear part of the covering of the prow, and both ends of the boat were peaked to a point, though the stern was not as sharp as the bow. Such was the boat the boys now entered.

"Plenty of room. Stow yourselves away wherever you want to, only leave me room at the tiller, and look out for your heads when the boom jibes," shouted Mr. McIntyre.

In they all tumbled, and soon had occupied the seats pretty completely.

"Always room for one more!" continued the good-natured fisherman, as a figure, much like that of a woman bundled up for a journey, was seen hurrying towards the boat, and calling lustily for them to wait.

"Why, that's Mary!" exclaimed Mason. "She ain't going, is she?"

"It looks some like it, to see the duds she's got on," said Mr. McIntyre.

"Of course she's going!" said Mary, by that time having reached the boat, "if she wants to."

"Here's a seat," cried Jack, very gallantly, "and a good one, too; you've got the mainmast for a back, and I'm on the other side."

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"Humph, sir!" said Mary, straightening herself and laughing. "And thinks ye the likes of me can't choose her company, sir? And as for back, I'm not so lazy and good-for-nothing as to be obliged to be a-hunting up something to lean on all the time."

The laugh was loud on all sides, and Jack looked rather sheepish as he sat down again.

"Come, hurry in! Don't stand there talking all day!" exclaimed Mr. McIntyre.

Mary hurried in, and, though several offered her a seat, took the very one next to Jack that she had just been scolding about.

"I believe you're right, after all, Master Jack," whispered Mary.

This confidence completely captured the young man who immediately began a very animated conversation, upon various unimportant topics, with his fair companion. The Benton boys amused themselves by watching the birds, of which a large number — principally gulls and tern or sea-swallows — were in constant motion above and around the boat, while the elder gentlemen arranged themselves as comfortably as they could, on their seats, and prepared to enjoy the sail. At length all were satisfactorily settled, and the boat glided out of the harbor into the rougher waters of the sea itself. The little boat fairly spun along, as the wind filled her sails, with her side bent close to the foaming caps of water through which she passed.

Her motion was somewhat different from that to which the party had recently been accustomed in the huge *North Star* — huge compared to the little craft that they now occupied; and most of the party seemed thoroughly pleased. The Benton boys alone, in spite of Allie's

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assertion, in the earlier part of the morning, that he was glad it was Sunday, appeared to long for their guns, as large white-winged gulls flew by them, within shot, and even seemed to mock them with their presence. Mason declared solemnly, that they "knew that it was Sunday and that there were no guns on board."

Several times they passed close by a brood of young ducks, with the old mother serenely swimming in the waters near by. The sea-pigeons, too, seemed unusually abundant, and the boys — in fact all — admired the adroitness with which they dived and reappeared again, upon the surface of the water, in some totally unexpected place — often on the very opposite side of the boat. One clear white tern, with a black cap on his head, followed them for nearly a mile, performing the most skillful evolutions of the wings that they had ever beheld, and chattering meanwhile like the rattling of an anchor chain. Mason threw out to him a small piece of fish that he found in the bottom of the boat, but he took no notice whatever of it. A moment later an immense gull, which had been hitherto unnoticed, swooped down from a great height and settled in the water just astern of the boat.

"The gull took it, anyway, if the tern didn't," said Mason. "We often catch them in that way, with a baited fish-hook."

The boat proceeded on, meanwhile, past several points of land on which houses, though never more than one or two, were situated, and past innumerable small islands, through intricate coves and channels, where often the boys could almost have touched the shore on either side with the oars, close by huge rocks, once over a shallow where two or three times they thought they were about

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to run aground; but the water was deeper than it looked, and soon they were sailing clear of all these again, and had come in full view of the Cove.

"Here, that's Lamb Cove!" remarked Mr. McIntyre. "See all the houses?"

There was a deep indentation of the coast line, and they had just passed the line of the outer point; gradually, house after house appeared, soon the bottom of the cove could be seen, and then, as they rounded the point, the houses of the opposite side came to view. There was a small hill with a flagstaff upon it, from which fluttered a small red flag with large white letters which they soon made out to read BETHEL.

"They always put up the flag half an hour before church," said Mr. McIntyre.

"What is that for?" asked Mr. Murphy.

"It is an old custom, sir; the flag is always taken down when church begins. People can come as long as the flag flies, but it is too late for them after it is taken down. We don't like folks late to church, sir; and they seldom are. They can come in at any time, but it disturbs the meeting, sir, and they don't like to do that."

The boat was soon at the wharf, and Mr. McIntyre and his guests all ascended the slope and proceeded at once to the church, leaving Mason, with a number of other boys of his age, to fasten the boat and approach at his leisure.

Lamb Cove was a charming little village. The harbor was shaped somewhat like the smaller end of an egg, having high hills, at the base of which nestled two or three white houses, on the left, with the main village, of perhaps twenty or thirty houses on the right, on which side the land was only about one-half as high as it was

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opposite. Near the mouth of the cove was a small hill, upon which was the flagstaff, and in the center of the group, between the houses and the hill, and a little way farther back of both, stood the church — an appropriate little building, with a very small steeple-like top, and painted white, like most of the other houses.

By this time the party had reached the church, and entered.

It was a small building, made entirely of wood, and not even finished inside; the beams and rafters being in their primitive state. The pulpit was small, but neat, and occupied the center of the room opposite the door. The seats were simply a double row of settees, ranged along either side of the broad central aisle. Three or four hymn books and an occasional brown-covered Bible lay in each seat, while a small organ occupied the head of the right-hand tier of seats, just below the pulpit.

The house was pretty full, when this unusually large number of visitors arrived, and the minister was just ascending the pulpit. Mr. McIntyre and his guests ranged themselves upon the two front seats of the left row, and quietly waited for the services to begin.

After the seats were well filled, with a congregation of nearly one hundred people, including the children, the services began. They were plain, simple, and such as best suited the congregation. The audience seemed devout and sincere in their devotions, and, after the service, even the guests expressed their edification at the good sense of the minister and the evident appreciation of his hearers. The text chosen was appropriate, and was from the book of John, 23d chapter, 3d verse: "Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They

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say unto him, We also go with thee." And from the book of Matthew, 4th chapter, 18th and 19th verses: "And Jesus walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon, called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them: Follow thou me, and I will make you fishers of men."

He spoke of the similarity of the present with those of the Bible times, and of the present occupation of the inhabitants of Lamb Cove with those of Galilee, in respect to the manner in which they earned their food. He told them that the appeal was as strong now as it was then, for them to prevail over their fellow-men, and turn them from the errors of their ways; that their life here was one of hardship and toil, but that there was a life beyond as boundless as the deep blue ocean, to which every one was going, and in which every one must render an account of his stewardship while here upon earth. He told them that the further exhortation to *follow Him* was as full of meaning now as it had been when it was given, and that now was the time for them to decide as to whom they would serve. The appeal ended, the good man gave out that noble old anthem of Kirke White's, which should be on the lips and in the hearts of every young boy and girl in America.

"The Lord our God is clothed with might,
The winds obey His will;
He speaks, and in His heavenly height,
The rolling sun stands still.

"Rebel, ye waves — and o'er the land
With threatening aspect roar!
The Lord uplifts His awful hand,
And chains you to the shore.

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"Howl, winds of night! your force combine!
Without His high behest,
Ye shall not, in the mountain pine,
Disturb the sparrow's nest.

"His voice sublime is heard afar,
In distant peals it dies;
He yokes the whirlwinds to His car,
And sweeps the howling skies.

"Ye nations, bend — in reverence bend;
Ye monarchs, wait His nod,
And bid the choral song ascend
To celebrate our God."

"Well, well!" said Mr. Ready, after the meeting was over, "that really made me feel homesick. To come way up here and hear that good old hymn, that my mother taught me when I was young; it's the first time I have heard it for years. Such a service is worth more than half or all the big churches and rich audiences in New York and Boston put together."

"Indeed it is!" said Mr. Benton; "but here comes the minister, and I think that Mr. McIntyre is about to introduce us."

It was as Mr. Benton had observed. Mr. McIntyre and the clergyman approached, and the latter was introduced to all of the party. Mr. Worcester, for that was his name, had lived on the coast, with his family, for two years, and intended to remain until the following spring, when, he said, he should return to his home in England. He was a very cordial gentleman, and urged the party to come home with him and dine.

"Don't be afraid of being too many!" said he to Mr. Benton. "We have room for twice the number, and very glad Mrs. Worcester will be, I assure you, to see some-

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body from America. We think a great deal of both the country and the people living there," added he, with a pleasant smile.

A nod from Mr. McIntyre, signifying that it was all right, and the party proceeded, under Mr. Worcester's guidance, to the parsonage. A cozy little white cottage, not far off, nestled at the feet of a hugh bowlder, which was overgrown and grown about with vegetation and evergreens of all varieties — while the low, distant hills filled the background.

The party found Mrs. Worcester smiling, ready to welcome them, having received warning of their approach through a messenger of her husband's. The table was already being laid, and there was every appearance of a cordial reception.

"We make no apologies," said Mrs. Worcester, "for anything that we have or give, for it is always the same — the best we have — and no one can ask more."

This modest little introduction put everybody at ease, at once, and prepossessed every one in favor of their host and hostess.

After dinner was served and the table removed, the party sat and chatted pleasantly until two o'clock, when Mr. Worcester was obliged to attend Sunday school. Most of the party followed him back to the church, the rest remained at home with Mrs. Worcester and amused themselves in one way or another, about the house, which was thrown open to them, while Mr. Benton sought repose in a nap, in one of the rooms which the good lady placed at his convenience, and Mr. Ready took possession of the lounge in the dining-room. The latter was soon in the midst, apparently, of sweet repose, as the strange sounds issuing regularly and somewhat hoarsely from his

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nasal member gave evidence. Mrs. Worcester, herself, also, retired and sought to wear away the afternoon in a nap.

At length supper was announced, but at the same time Mr. McIntyre proposed starting for home. To this Mr. and Mrs. Worcester would by no means consent. They must stay to supper, at any rate, and then the house was at their disposal for the night and the following day also. Mrs. Worcester begged her guests to remain over the morrow and take a trip about the place, and her good husband urged it also, and offered to take them about and show them around himself.

After a consultation with Mr. Ready and Mr. McIntyre, it was determined to remain to supper, but not to stay longer, as it might be that the vessel would have to go on a trip "down the coast," and it would not do to stay from her too long. This decided the point, yet many were the protests issued by the kind host and hostess, who wished heartily to prolong the stay of their unexpected but pleasant companions.

The supper was as relishable a meal as the dinner had been, though it was made up of mostly cold articles. A brace of cold roast ducks and a large dish of apple-sauce, occupied one end of the table, while a plate of cods' tongues was at the other end; these, with bread and butter, tea and milk, and a large plate of ginger crackers, constituted the repast.

"It's a cold crust that we have to offer," said Mrs. Worcester.

"A cold crust is much better, to my mind, than a hot one," replied Mr. Benton.

"Were you here to-morrow you might have your ducks hot, at least," remarked Mr. Worcester.

"On that point, also," said Mr. Benton, determined to

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be gracious in the extreme, "cold meats are always preferable toward night."

"Were you in the States," and Mrs. Worcester smiled comically, "you might have English breakfast tea instead of a mixture of whatever some trader might see fit to sell you."

"Ah — hem —" said Mr. Benton, "my good lady, you mistake, a breakfast tea would never do for supper."

It is uncertain how far Mr. Benton would have carried his gallantry, or to what extent it might have been put to the test, had not at that moment a loud knocking at the door attracted the attention of all at the tables. Upon Mr. Worcester's arising and opening the door, it was found that one of the young gentlemen of the village, passing by his nets, set near an angle of the rocks, quite close to one of the points, had discovered a pair of fine trout entangled within its meshes; knowing of the arrival at the house of his pastor, he had hastened to offer them for his guests' supper.

Mr. Worcester thanked the young man heartily and hastened to display them to the guests.

"Here!" exclaimed Mrs. Worcester; "Mr. Benton shall now have nothing further to say, now!" and the good lady proceeded to roast the fish, which were already cleaned, and roll them in meal. Then, taking the cover from the stove, she put the gridiron on and placed the fish over the coals.

"What! roast fish in Indian meal!" replied Mr. Murphy; "I never heard of such a thing before."

"It keeps them from burning, when the fire is hot," said the good lady, "and I am glad enough to give you all a taste of Labrador trout."

"Do you catch many such fine fellows as these, here?" asked Mr. Furness.

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"Oh, yes, in the nets. The boys catch a good many of them. Sometimes as many as two or three barrels."

"A barrel of trout!" exclaimed Mr. Taylor.

"Oh, yes," put in Mr. Ready, "one year I took home seven; and do you think, that the officers at the custom house would not believe the manifest, and so came down to the wharf themselves, in a body, to look at them."

"Did they collect any duty on them?" laughed Mr. Murphy.

"Oh, I gave them all a couple," said Mr. Ready; "and strange to say, the rest of the cargo didn't cost me anything. After carefully examining into the case, it was found that the rest of the articles we brought down were not dutiable," he added, laughing.

At length the trout were cooked and served. All had a piece, and they were beautiful and tender, though no one ate any large amount after the supper already freely partaken of.

"All pleasures have an end," said Mr. McIntyre, as all arose from the table; "and I suppose that we must be starting for home, as soon as we can."

The gentlemen and even Mrs. Worcester saw the force of this remark, and so with many cordial hand-shakings and hearty good wishes, the little party bade adieu to the kind pastor and his wife, and hurried to the boat.

Mr. McIntyre and Mason were ready to receive them, and, as soon as all were embarked, sail was once more set, and the little boat fairly spun through the water with a fair wind all the way home.

"What a pleasant visit!" exclaimed Mr. Benton, evidently from the bottom of his heart, judging from the enthusiasm with which he said it.

Thus ended a Sunday in Labrador.

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CHAPTER XI.

HOW THE BOYS DREDGED ON THE TRIP "DOWN ALONG."

"ALL hands on deck!" sounded the voice of Mr. Ready, clear and loud, early Monday morning. "Lively, boys! all ready to sail."

"Why, Mr. Ready!" said Mrs. McIntyre, "you're not going to leave us so soon, are you?"

"Why! haven't we taken you by storm, and haven't we kept you so for nearly a week?" said Mr. Ready, laughing.

"Laws sakes, just hear the man talk!" exclaimed Mrs. McIntyre. "What's three days and a half?"

"Say, now, look a here!" again replied Mr. Ready. "Three days and a half for ten persons is the same as keeping any one of us over a month, and I guess you'd git kinder tired of any one of us by that time!"

"I should get tired of you, if you was continually badgering around like this,—I wish somebody *would* take you off; but good by to ye, if you really must go!" And the two shook hands heartily, and then Mr. Ready started for the vessel, leaving word for all to come on board as soon as breakfast was eaten, as they would then be ready to sail.

A little later, and the party gathered in Mrs. McIntyre's cozy dining-room, around the great stove, which crackled and roared with a heaping fire of spruce-wood, diffusing its genial heat far into the room, and awaited breakfast.

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The boys had just finished packing up their specimens in a stout barrel, with hay and dry grass sufficient to protect them from moisture and dampness. The best specimens had at last been packed and the barrel headed up, to be taken on board with the passengers.

Mrs. McIntyre bustled about with a huge coffee pot in one hand and an immense plate of steaming omelet in the other, these she deposited upon the table; returning to the stove she drew from the oven a large covered dish, which, upon the removal of the cover, revealed a large, freshly baked cod. From the heater just above the oven, came dishes of corn-cakes and hot rolls. The very sight of the nice things that Mrs. McIntyre had prepared, for this parting meal of her guests, was enough to invite the appetite of the most fastidious; and it really seemed as if the good lady had outdone herself, when she announced some "flapjacks and syrup, if any of the party would like them." Was there any of the party who would not like them?

"Where do you get your syrup from?" asked Mr. Jacobs.

"It comes in cakes from Quebec," said the good woman; "the traders bring it to us. It is real maple sugar melted down, and they gets the best of maple sugar in Canada," added she.

After all had eaten their fill, came the leave-takings; and the good woman was obliged to perform the very undignified act of wiping her eyes and nose with her apron several times, while bidding farewell to the guests, who, in so short a time, had become so intimate with her. Mary was even less able to control her feelings than her mother, and fairly blubbered right out when Jack Ready came to say good by to her. Even Freddie

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was affected visibly, though he afterwards said, very cruelly, that for a minute he didn't know which was Mary's head and which was Jack's — they were so near together; then something sounded as if somebody was slapping somebody else, but they pulled their heads apart so quick that he could not tell which it was that got slapped.

At length, with promises to call again on the return trip, the last words were said, and the party were once more on the move toward the wharf where lay the boat that was to carry them to the vessel.

Fifteen minutes later and the anchor chain of the *North Star* was rattling to the music of the sailors as they pumped the heavy windlass, and soon, with all sails set, the vessel herself was bending to the breeze that gradually filled her sails, as the wheelsman kept her off so as to give her the benefit of every available breath of wind.

"Off once more!" cried Mr. Ready, in the loudest tone of voice that he could muster; "now, hurra for 'down along!'" and he rubbed his hands smartly together, as if already in the jolly anticipation of another reception that he had in mind, farther down the coast.

"Well! Mr. Ready," said Mr. Benton, stopping him suddenly, in the middle of the deck, "what's our next place?"

"Well! Mr. Benton," returned Mr. Ready, laughing, "as we say up here — 'that's accordin'!' If the wind will carry us to Rocky Bay, we'll go there; if not, we'll go as far as we ken!"

"H'm-m!" remarked Mr. Benton. "I suppose that's as far as we *can* go," and both men laughed at themselves and each other immoderately.

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"If we could have the use of one of the boats and a man to help us at the next stopping-place," said Mr. Jacobs, who at that moment came up to where Mr. Ready was standing, "I think that the boys and I will do some dredging."

"Why, certainly," replied Mr. Ready, "I'll fix that all right, when we anchor."

"Thank you!" replied Mr. Jacobs, as he turned and disappeared around the galley on the other side of the boat.

"It's all right, boys! have the dredges ready!" shouted Mr. Jacobs.

"No fear of that, sir!" was the reply. "And thank you a hundred times," answered Allie.

These important points now settled, the party variously disposed of themselves to enjoy the sail, which was really one of the most delightful ones that they enjoyed during the trip. The boys watched over the side of the vessel for seaweed and other specimens, and captured a large number of interesting species; and the genial face of Mr. Murphy fairly shone, as he watched, with fatherly eye, their proceedings. Mr. Taylor and Mr. Benton, who had become almost inseparable, were seated in their easy chairs just behind the mainmast, engaged in a discussion concerning the possibility of establishing a trading post on the Labrador coast. Mr. Jacobs was aiding the boys in their work, while Mr. Furness was at the galley door talking with Max, who was busily engaged in preparing dinner, and trying to induce him to give them boiled codfish instead of fish chowder.

"What if I give you both!" asked Max.

"That would be an unexpected treat," said Mr. Furness, smiling.

"Well, then, I think that I shall have to treat you

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unexpectedly!" laughed Max, "for I shall give you both this time."

"What a delightful cook you are!" exclaimed Mr. Furness, as he turned to seek the bow of the vessel, where he was soon comfortably settled watching the sights on shore, past which the vessel rapidly sailed toward her next port of destination.

As the breeze continued good, the *North Star* sped onward all day long, till towards evening, when she lay just off Rocky Bay Point.

"Shall we go in here, or keep on to Stick Point?" asked the captain.

"I guess we'll go in!" said Mr. Ready. "It isn't much farther, and we'll soon get there with this breeze."

"I suppose you know the place thoroughly," asked the captain somewhat anxiously, apparently not much liking the idea of a night or evening run on a strange coast.

"Bless your heart, yes! I've been all over here, day and night."

"All right, then," laughed the captain, "on we go!"

About nine in the evening a bright, low light was seen just ahead on the port bow of the *North Star*.

"There's a light house!" cried the captain.

"No, there isn't!" sounded Mr. Ready's voice from the cabin, as he hastened up the companion-way on deck. "That's a light in Jenny Godard's window. That's Stick Point. Steer straight for the light."

The captain gave the orders to the man at the wheel, who soon changed the course of the vessel as the captain had ordered. Soon a large number of small islands and shoal places appeared on the port side, then a larger island with a huge white trellis-work wooden tower.

"That's the beacon," said Mr. Ready, "steer right

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ahead and turn to the right a little, and you'll soon see the houses."

The sky was clear, and objects could be seen almost as plainly as if there had been daylight. As the vessel rounded the point, as many as a dozen lights burst in sight.

"Now steer right for the lights," said Mr. Ready.

Her captain did as he was bid, and gradually the distance became less and less, until soon the vessel entered a cozy, sheltered harbor, with houses lining the shores on either side. At the extreme left hand, a large house occupied the point, though it was somewhat shut out from the others by a jutting of several huge pieces of ledge.

"That's the light we saw!" said Mr. Ready. "That's Jenny Godard's."

"Let go the anchor!" shouted the captain.

A great rattling of chains followed; and as the vessel rounded the point, at a word from Mr. Ready, the captain gave the order, and the huge chain fairly deafened those near by, as it clattered against the iron pipes on its way to the bottom; a moment more and the *North Star* was anchored for the night.

The boys were up early the next morning, with Mr. Jacobs, preparing their dredging apparatus. The dredges were brought out, as also the boxes of cans, jars, and bottles of alcohol, and the long ropes and weights attached. The stern boat was lowered by the men, and the dredge, with the buckets and sieve, were put into it, while the dip-net also was not forgotten. After a hasty breakfast of coffee and hardtack, the boys and Mr. Jacobs, assisted by one of the crew, got into the boat and rowed off into the deeper water of the harbor.

"There, now!" exclaimed Mr. Jacobs, "keep the boat

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steady. I imagine that the water is deep enough here to give us a fair show for getting something." Then stepping into the stern of the boat, he held the dredge, almost to the water, by the end of the bag, while he threw overboard the sinking weight and placed the rope in the hollow made for the sculler's oar, and then let go. The boat was nearly stationary, and, as the rope was marked off by small bits of string tied around it into fathoms, he began to count, as the heavy weight sank deeper and deeper in the water.

"Thirteen, fourteen, fifteen" — counted Mr. Jacobs. "There, she slackens! she has reached bottom in fifteen fathoms of water. Now row ahead, slowly; we must let out nearly as much more rope, so as to get the right cant on the line; the dredge must lie on her side and scoop well, instead of jumping about from side to side. There, that's about right!" exclaimed Mr. Jacobs. "Now make the end fast about the center of the thwart. Now I'll sit down a moment."

Meanwhile the boat was rowed forward slowly, but steadily.

"Now, John!" said Mr. Jacobs, "stand up firmly, in the stern, and take the line up carefully in your hand."

John did as he was bid, but could hardly hold it, it pulled so strongly.

"Heavy, is it?" laughed Mr. Jacobs. "It will be heavier than that before we haul it up. What's the bottom?"

"The bottom!" exclaimed John. "Why, how can I tell, when it's ninety feet below me; I can't see it, and I surely can't go down there to find out!"

"Did you ever draw a stick through a lot of mud or clay, and see what an even furrow it made and how

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smooth it felt?" asked Mr. Jacobs. "Or did you ever do the same through sand and find how even it drew, yet how rough it felt? Or did you ever draw the same stick over a mass of pebbles, and do you remember how the stick jerked and trembled in your hands? or over a bed of rocks, and how it jumped and often caught as you pulled it along? Well, that's the way the dredge goes! Now, what's the bottom?"

John took up the rope again, which he had let drop, and held it carefully in his hands for a few moments.

"It seems quite smooth, but rather rough," said John, "yet sometimes it seems to pull terribly!"

Mr. Jacobs laughed. "Well! what do you say?"

"Why, it must be clay."

"But you say 'smooth, but rough!'" said Mr. Jacobs.

"Yes, it is; and that would be sandy; when it pulls, I suppose it catches on the edges of rocks."

"You are right!" said Mr. Jacobs. "Sandy and rocky bottom. Fifteen fathoms. Stick Point harbor, center of the channel. Put that down in your note-book!"

Allie produced a small pocket note-book and carefully wrote down, as directed.

"Well!" said Mr. Jacobs, arranging himself in a comfortable position on the seat, with his arms thrown around his head, which was leaning on one side of the gunwale of the boat, and his feet, in a very unprofessional-like attitude, on the opposite side; "is she on the bottom?"

"Is she! Why, I suppose so, of course," said John.

"Yes! but don't you see that we are going faster than we were at first, and that the line is at more of an angle with the water? Now pull on the rope, and see if it don't pull easier than before."

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"Oh yes, sir, much easier!" replied John, as he held the rope.

"Now, what would happen if you should stop rowing?" asked Mr. Jacobs. "No, no! don't do it!" he said as the man lay to on his oars for a moment. The man began rowing again, as before. "Now what have we done?" said Mr. Jacobs.

"I'm sure I don't know!" replied John, perfectly aghast at so much that was new to him.

"Well, I'll tell you! Now listen carefully. The man rowed so fast, that both the dredge and its weight were not heavy enough to keep their place on the bottom, but were lifted right up and drawn through the water above the bottom. Then instead of rowing more slowly, to let them sink gradually in the same position to their places again, the man stopped rowing; the strain was thus taken off the rope, the sinker being six feet in front of the dredge and heavier than the dredge, sank first, this turned the dredge bottom up — and the sand and material in the bag being too heavy to float, fell out and emptied the bag. So there is now nothing in the net, and you have lost all you gained."

This was indeed a new way of working and reasoning to the boys, but they understood it at once.

"Well, we'll try it again!" exclaimed Allie.

The dredge was allowed to sink to the bottom, and the man began rowing again, but this time not so fast as before. John held the line, and found the weight growing gradually heavier and heavier, until at length he exclaimed:

"It must be getting full now, it's getting awful heavy; I guess it's caught on a rock; I can't start it."

The man at the oars, also, was sweating, and bending at his oars, unable to move the boat a foot.

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Mr. Jacobs, still retaining his position, looked on and laughed heartily. "Pull away," he shouted encouragingly to the man; "haul in the line, John."

But neither the man or John could make any impression.

"Stop rowing, pull in the line," said Mr. Jacobs; and the man dropped his oars and began to pull at the line, drawing the boat backwards, as he pulled, until finally the rope became perpendicular with the stern of the boat.

"Two or three hard pulls, now!" said Mr. Jacobs.

These were given, and suddenly the dredge became detached from the rock, on which it had struck, and began to come up slowly, as the man exerted all his strength pulling in the line.

"It's pretty full, sir!" exclaimed the man. "Here it is! What shall I do with it?"

The man then first hauled in the sinker, then, drawing up the dredge, rested its edge on the edge of the boat. It was full to the mouth. And so many curious things lay, even in sight, on the very top, that none of the boys could restrain an exclamation of surprise. There were star-fish, five, six, and many fingered, of brown, red, and dun color; sea-urchins, with their long, green spines covering them everywhere except at the mouth; immense sea-cucumbers or holothurians; and shrimps and crabs by the hundreds. Besides this the shells and worms, as well as many other curious sea-animals, occasionally showed from beneath the mass of sand and rock — "live rock," as the man called it, while this same "live rock" or "red rock," a species of Nullipore, found growing on the rocks and even encrusting into delicate ferns and branches by itself, was everywhere imbedded in the net.

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"Empty the net into the pails!" said Mr. Jacobs.

This was done, and the boys at once set to work to wash the material thus procured in the sieve, and sort it; putting the larger and heavier specimens in one pail by themselves, the lighter and more delicate ones in another.

"Now try it again," said Mr. Jacobs, and a second time the dredge was lowered, and raised with much the same results. The boys, meantime, sifting and sorting the specimens, while the man from the crew did the heavy work, and Mr. Jacobs watched over all, with the eye of a man accustomed to such work from long practice.

Again and again was the dredge hauled and let down, and all took part in the general work, until every pail, bucket, and dish, was filled with specimens; and, with a huge dredge full of material in tow, the boat, at length, headed for the vessel.

As they neared the *North Star*, Max's watchful eye saw them, even before any of the others, and his cheerful voice sounded to them even before they could distinguish his words. A few hasty strokes of the oar, however, soon brought them near enough to recognize the familiar greeting of: "Dinner, gentlemens!"

The boys responded, at once, with a hearty cheer, and soon the whole party were alongside of the vessel, eagerly clambering up the side into the ship.

"Well, my boys!" shouted Mr. Benton's cordial voice, "what luck! did you have a good time?"

"Didn't we!" exclaimed one and all.

"Oh, Max!" shouted Freddie; foremost as usual. "*Can* we have something to eat!"

"Certainly, my hearties!" said the good-natured cook,

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clapping him on the shoulders. "What will you have? There is bean soup—"

"That will do!" exclaimed Allie; and then there was a grand rush for the galley door, and in a moment five hungry mortals were making rapid progress toward the bottom of the soup-kettle. The soup being finished, and the plates piled away, the next thing in order came in the shape of boiled salmon, with egg sauce; this was soon disposed of in a similar manner, and a dessert of plum-pudding and molasses was added.

"Why didn't you tell us before!" sighed Freddie, as he gazed fondly at the big pudding, "that that was coming?"

"Because I wanted to surprise you!" replied Max, laughing. "You can't have but one plateful, sir; because it will make you sick."

"I'm afraid that I can't eat but one plateful, anyway," said Freddie, in such a doleful tone that everybody was obliged to stop eating, for a moment, to laugh.

"Why! would you want to eat more than one plateful, after all that you have made way with already?" asked Mr. Jacobs, good-humoredly.

"Yes! I would," pouted Master Fred. "I'd like to eat it all."

"What! and not leave any for anybody else?"

"I think you are real mean!" said Freddie, "to tease me so. Can't I have some more, Max?" he added; for in spite of the talking, which all had indulged in, he had managed to clean his plate in a remarkably short space of time.

"Only just so much!" laughed Max, as he heaped the plate full the second time. "Now don't you dare to look at the pudding again, sir!"

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As the second plate seemed sufficient to meet the wants of the young gentleman, and as by this time all the others had finished, Max now poured out a large pan full of scalding water and began to wash up, while the boys turned to their specimens and began sorting them.

The box containing the gigs and jars of alcohol was now re-opened, and the work of sorting and preparing begun in earnest.

The specimens were sifted and sorted, and then laid aside in groups to be tied in parcels of muslin and labeled before being put finally into the alcohol.

There were all sorts of curious objects. Crabs and other crustacea, large and small, soft and hard bodied, and of most peculiar forms; barnacles; whale lice and minute parasitical ferns; and a miscellaneous assortment of shrimps, some long and slender, others short and full of eggs, clinging to their flipper-like legs in such quantities that it seemed almost impossible that such innumerable little animals could exist at all.

Then there were worms: large, flat, but short worms, with huge scales over the body, like the plates of some old-fashioned armor; long, thin-bodied worms, with rows of thread-like tentacles clustered all around their heads; common flat worms, hair worms, red worms, and worms in little cases; long, white animals that looked like worms. Small gilly-fish, star-fish, sea-urchins, sand dollars, serpent-stars, polyps, hydriads, sertula, cereal animals, holothurians, sea-cucumbers — of all varieties of shape. The boys were half wild merely looking at the assortment, while everybody in the ship was gathered around them admiring the beauties of the sea-bottom.

"I declare!" said Allie, as he drew out from the sieve a huge expanded sea-anemone, "if I should ever drown,

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I think I should be perfectly happy if I knew that I were lying on a bed of these beautiful sea creatures."

"A sentiment which others share with you," responded Mr. Jacobs; "but see these beautiful shells!"

As he spoke Mr. Jacobs took up several small shells, of a pearly luster, which were beautifully covered with minute lines or striæ, and held them up, so that the light, falling upon them, caused them to show most beautiful rainbow colors all over their surface; and there were others of a similar kind but differently marked, showing that there is more than one species.

"Here are some pretty ones!" said Allie, picking up some small, reddish shells with a little white on them.

The boys then sorted their specimens, as well as they could, and then counted twenty-four distinct species; they were all then carefully tied in little bags, labeled inside and out — so that if one of the labels should be destroyed the other would remain, and thrown together into alcohol. The worms and soft animals were put into separate parcels and treated in like manner, but in no case were hard and soft bodied specimens placed together, or even in the same vial or jar. The minute specimens, of which there were a great many, were put into the small boxes and bottles. Everything was carefully numbered and labeled, and the numbers copied into the note-book, with whatever was on the label next to its number, and as much more as could be ascertained besides.

Thus the boys worked hard all the day and disposed of all of their specimens by night.

The next day it rained slightly; but rain was no hindrance to the boys, who were eager to continue their work of the day before, and get new specimens, — so

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this day, also, was devoted to dredging, and a harvest was the result.

Thus the days passed, and with the usual results, — always fine lots of specimens; and every new harbor furnished a new field for work, until, before the end of the voyage, the boys had their bottles and cans filled full with the sea life of Labrador.

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CHAPTER XII.

WHAT MR. MURPHY AND THE BOYS LEARNED ABOUT CODFISH — A CURLEW HUNT.

"THEY say, boys," exclaimed Mr. Murphy, one morning, "that Stick Point is the largest fishing establishment on the coast. What do you say to going on shore with me, and giving a good look at the place and the process of curing fish?"

"Good! we'll go!" shouted Allie, who was now general spokesman for the boys, including also Jack Ready.

"All right. Can we have the boat, captain?" asked Mr. Murphy of the captain, who was standing near, "or will somebody put us ashore?"

"I'll put you ashore myself," said the captain, good-naturedly, stretching himself as he spoke. "I want to go ashore and see something, myself. I'll go with you."

In a few moments the boat was alongside the vessel, and the captain, holding on to the ladder, was waiting for the others to jump in.

"There!" he exclaimed; "now we're off for the day."

"Good riddance to you!" called out Max from the galley. "You needn't come back till night; you must get your dinner on shore, for you'll get none here!"

The cook laughed heartily as he said this, but instantly ducked his head and tried to shut the galley door, as a dipperful of cold water came over the side of the vessel and wet him thoroughly.

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"There's some dinner for you!" said the captain, as he hurried to the oars, to get away from the vessel before Max should have time to retaliate.

Every one laughed heartily at Max, who brushed the water off with one hand while he shook his fist at the captain with the other, calling out at the same time:

"Wait till I get you back here!"

"I'll not do it!" replied the captain, as he made for the shore with his passengers.

As the wharf was not far off, the boat soon reached it, and the boys and Mr. Murphy climbed quickly to the landing.

Although it was yet early in the morning, the men were already hard at work at their labor, and were curing several boat loads of fish that had just arrived from the fishing grounds.

"Good morning, Mr. Murphy," said Mr. Godard, as he came forward and shook Mr. Murphy and all the boys by the hand. "Good morning, boys; glad to see you around so early this morning."

"We're glad to see you, sir," exclaimed Freddie.

"And we've come to see all there is to see about your fishery," said John, "if you'll let us."

"Let you! why, of course I will; and I'll go around with you, and show you a great many things that you would not see at all, otherwise," said Mr. Godard.

"That's good," and the boys fairly danced with joy at this piece of good news, while Mr. Godard and Mr. Murphy walked about to the end of the wharf to see the men throwing up the codfish, from a boat below, into a curiously shaped partition in one corner of the wharf.

"So you use a pitchfork for more purposes than one," laughed Mr. Murphy, as he watched the men heave the

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fish from the boat on the tines of huge handled pitch-forks.

"Oh, yes; we couldn't get along very well without these," replied Mr. Godard.

"What a queer-looking boat!" continued Mr. Murphy.

"Yes; that's a 'novie.' We have two kinds of boats in our fishing: the 'novies' and the 'American barges;' this one is a novie; it is painted red, inside and out: the large ones you see, anchored out there in the water, are the barges. The fishermen prefer them, however, because they are so much larger than the others, and carry a great deal more; but they have heavy stones for ballast in them, and would sink at once if the water should fill them."

"And would not the others?" asked Mr. Murphy.

"Oh, no; the others are smaller, but they are as light as cork, and would float on the water if you turned them over."

"Then I should think that all the men would use the novies."

"One would think so; but, on the contrary, every one prefers the barge, as it is so much larger and brings in more fish from the ground, when fish are plenty, and everything is risked for a 'good catch.'"

"What a little rope!" exclaimed Freddie, as he picked up something from one side of the wharf.

"That's not a little rope," said Mr. Godard, "but it *is* a big fish-line."

"Fish-line!" cried Allie, "I don't want to catch fish with that line!"

"Yes; a big fish-line!" continued Mr. Godard. "The men use that with a big sinker on the end, for catching big fish in deep water. Sometimes they fish

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with it in sixty to seventy fathoms of water — that is, in nearly four hundred feet of water — and bring up fish weighing sixty to seventy pounds."

"Dear me; I shouldn't like that fishing," said Allie.

"The smaller line," continued Mr. Godard, "is used in shallow water, and is the ordinary cod line; but come with me, and see the men at work."

The party all followed as Mr. Godard led the way to another part of the same wharf, where about a dozen men were hard at work, cleaning and salting down the fish that had been brought in by a previous boat.

The boys watched the process eagerly. One of the men went by the very bloody and terrible name of the "throat-cutter." This man would seize the fish with his thumb and forefinger, placing the thumb in the hollow just below the chin, and the forefinger in the eye, and, throwing the fish upon the bench, so that the head just hung over the edge, would press upon it so as to open the gills and throw the muscles of the throat upward. A stout knife in the other hand, cut through this muscle, and then cut open the belly clear to the lower fin. Two quick motions of the knife accomplished all this, and the fish was thrown to the next man.

The boys could see that the man used a very curious knife for this work. It had a heavy round handle, and its blade was not over six inches long, and tapered to a rounded point, while it was as sharp as a razor on both edges. The man worked so fast that, at first, the boys had some difficulty in following him, but they soon caught the movements, and Mr. Godard stopped him and let each boy, in turn, try it; and soon all were pronounced first-class throat-cutters, and ready to hire out for the fishery. Even Mr. Murphy carefully laid down

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his meerschaum and took a hand at the sport, but cutting too far down, a drop of blood fell upon the invaluable pipe, and everything else was left to attend to its wants.

When the fish had left the hands of the throat-cutter, it was immediately passed over to the next man, who went by the no less terrible name of the "header." The boys watched this man as he seized the fish firmly by the head and body, and, bending it over a piece of sharp iron on the edge of the table, forced them apart. The head, with all the insides attached, was thrown through a trough into the sea below, the liver was picked out, and pushed through a hole in the bench, into a barrel beneath, and the body passed to the third man.

This man was called the "splitter." His duty was to cut out the backbone of the fish, and throw the body into a barrow, which, when it was full, was carried into the shed that the fish might be salted down. Three men, then, always worked at a bench together, and there was usually a small boy to pick the fish up and lay them on the bench for the throat-cutter, or first man.

"Now come into the shed," said Mr. Godard, "and see them salt the fish down."

Mr. Murphy and the boys followed.

The shed was a large building, opened at both ends by wide doors, and with a plank walk from one end to the other. On both sides of the entrance near the stage were huge bins of salt, and above, a large loft where were kept nets and other fishing gear.

The boys watched the salting down process with great interest.

The fish were first laid head to tail, in double layers, in small piles, with abundance of salt between each layer, until each pile was several feet in height. Another pile

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of similar layers would then be built up, outside the first, until all the fish were salted and stored, or until the room was full to the walk.

At the farther end of the shed, men were washing several piles of fish, that had been salted already a month or more, previous to spreading them.

They had a large trough-like tub full of water, into which the fish were thrown, and a man at each end kept them in constant motion in the water with a long pole, on the end of which was a small cross-board.

When the fish were sufficiently washed, and the salt taken off of them, they were carried out of doors and spread, either upon the clean surface of the rocks or upon the fish flakes, to dry in the sun.

The fish flakes were small tables of lattice-work, through which the air could easily penetrate, and were ranged in rows wherever the nature of the ground would afford them a standing place.

As the boys emerged from the front end of the shed, they saw the rocks and the fish flakes covered everywhere with fish drying in the warm sunshine, while a number of men were taking off some pieces of fir-bark from a large pile near by.

"That is the way we pile our fish over night and when we have bad weather," said Mr. Godard.

The fish were arranged in layers built up, one above the other, and out, from a common center of fish-tails, until the pile was about as deep as it was high. Those the boys saw were about six feet in diameter and three feet high. They were packed very solidly, and Allie noticed that they were placed on small pebbles that had evidently been set into the earth as a sort of bed for their reception.

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"Quite a display here, Mr. Godard," said Mr. Murphy. "How many have you?"

"Ah! I reckon some eleven hundred quintals and the men's share," replied Mr. Godard. "You see the season is not half over yet; I guess we'll get a load."

"How much is a quintal?" asked Allie.

"Oh, a quintal is different, according," laughed Mr. Godard. "It's 212 pounds of wet fish, just out of the water, and, as fish shrink one-half in drying, it's 112 pounds of dry fish. We measure all our fish, dry or wet, by quintals, because that's the way we sell it. Our boats hold so many quintals; the men returning from the fishing ground have caught so many quintals; *not* so many pounds or so many fish, — and at the end of the season each man's share is so many quintals."

"You must use a great deal of salt in preserving so many fish," said Mr. Murphy.

"Yes, we do; the salt gets used up very fast. We generally reckon not far from a barrel of salt for every ten quintals of fish, and five barrels to a hogshead."

"Where do you get your salt?" continued Mr. Murphy.

"Oh, the vessels that take our fish generally bring it to us either in the early spring or the fall before. Sometimes a vessel comes out from Quebec called the 'salt vessel,' and goes all the way 'down along,' supplying all the stations."

Mr. Godard then took them down toward the wharf again and showed them how cod-liver oil was made. The boys would not at first believe that all those huge barrels or puncheons that they saw were full of anything but slime and gurry, but Mr. Godard took a stick and, pushing away the top, showed them that beneath the gurry was clear, brown oil.

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Then he took them to another barrel full of fresh cod-livers and showed them that; then to another where they had only begun to decay, and so gradually from one to another, until they had seen the huge tubfuls rotting in the sun, and had then watched the men draw off the oil into kegs. Mr. Godard explained that a great deal of water often got into the tubs, and, as that always remained at the bottom, each tub had a small hole bored in it near the lower side, into which a wooden plug was fastened. As he spoke, Mr. Godard pulled out the plug from one of the casks, and a large stream of water gushed out; as soon as all the water was out the hole was plugged up again, and the mass in the tub was found to be about six inches deeper or lower down than before and now nearly all, save the top, clear oil.

In one corner of the platform was a big iron kettle where the men were hastening the process of oil making by boiling, and forming a different kind of oil, — the two kinds being known as the "brown oil" and the "straw or pale oil."

All the oil was strained carefully through cloth placed in the funnel, before going into the barrels; and the old pieces of liver or gurry thrown into old hogsheads, and kept for a most peculiar use. Mr. Godard said that the men mixed it with tar, and used it as an oil paint to put on their huts and sheds in the summer to make them water tight.

"There, boys," exclaimed Mr. Murphy, "that ought to teach you to make the most of your opportunities whenever you can, and not to waste anything, as all things have their use," said he.

Freddie laughed, and very innocently, and perhaps a little mischievously, pointing to the cod heads that the

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men were throwing into the water beneath, where there had already accumulated a great quantity, asked:

"And what use do they make of these things, that they are throwing away so fast?"

Mr. Godard and Mr. Murphy both winked very hard at each other; but the latter replied quite unabashed:

"See all those small boys over the wharf there, fishing for tomcod and flounders?"

"Yes!" cried Freddie.

"Well! if you should ask their mothers, of what use the old cod heads that the men now throw away were, they would soon find an answer;" laughed Mr. Murphy.

After wandering around among the men, and on the wharf until dinner-time, all were invited to come up to the house, as dinner was ready.

At last all were seated, and the dishes uncovered. There was an immense dish of roasted curlew with dumplings, with a quantity of rich gravy; a boiled salmon, with egg sauce; and a leg of cold ham, warmed over in the oven, with potatoes and turnips for vegetables, and plenty of bread and butter and tea or coffee. A dessert of brown plum-pudding and molasses finished the meal. Then Mr. Murphy went into the sitting-room to take a nap, while the boys were off with Mr. Godard's boys on a tour of the island.

The boys had no more than left the house, before they all came running back in the greatest confusion. They had seen a large flock of curlews alight on one of the crests of the island, and were after their guns. All the available fowling-pieces were quickly sought, and powder and shot, caps, and tow for wads, for the old-fashioned muskets that were quickly brought from their hiding-places.

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At length, all were prepared, and soon they started off, in good humor, for a curlew hunt.

There were six boys, and four of them had guns. They were "muzzle loaders;" but they had done good work, and were good shooters at a long distance, which was the main point.

They went along, at first, in quite a lively manner, and much elated with the prospect of a grand hunt. The curlews did not appear to have moved much from their original position, and even at that distance could be seen running along on the ground near the top of the distant knoll where they were now feeding.

"I'll tell you what!" exclaimed Jimmy Godard, the eldest of Mrs. Godard's boys. "Me and Charley Turner will go around on the east side of the hill, and you and Tom stay here for a minute till you see us go over the point there, and then creep up on this side; then if the birds fly, we'll drive them down towards the end of the island, — while if they try to cross over to either of the other islands, we'll get a shot at them!"

This was such good logic that it was put into immediate operation, and soon both parties were cautiously approaching, each from his respective position.

The guns were divided so that both parties had two, but the larger party of boys, contrary to the rule of equal division, had both single-barrelled guns, while the smaller party had both double-barrelled guns.

"Never mind!" said Freddie, "if they have got more shots than we have, we are nearer the birds."

As Freddie spoke the party of four crept close up to a ledge of rocks, near by, and then, following them along for a few rods, were able to get within a short distance of the birds, which were still feeding, unconscious of

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their presence, near the top of the knoll. When the boys reached this point, they halted, and getting their guns ready they prepared to shoot.

"Now, wait till Jimmy fires!" said Charley, "and then let 'um have it, just as they rise."

A moment more and two sharp reports and puffs of blue smoke were heard and seen, — then the boys fired as the birds gathered themselves for flight, and while the boys behind the hill gave them the contents of their second barrels, the flock, like a great cloud, passed slowly to the north and settled once more on the island.

"We'll have two more shots at them!" exclaimed Jimmy Godard, as he appeared over the top of the hill; "over where they are, and another one nearer the house; they don't fly very far at a time."

"Now, let's pick up the birds!" said Freddie, who was already chasing a wounded one down the hill full tilt.

"All right!" cried John, as he disappeared over the crest of the hill, on the full run, after another one.

"Here's one fallen into the water!" cried Charlie, — "that's too bad, but we'll get him yet, if we hurry."

"I'll go after him," said the boy who had accompanied them.

"Eleven!" cried Jimmy, "and three out."

"Thirteen, and two out," said Freddie, who just then appeared with his birds in his hands, — the second being one that he had found lying dead down the hill aways.

"Fourteen, and one out!" echoed John from the top of the crest.

"I'm afraid the out is pretty far out, too!" cried Jimmy. "See! he's running and nearly half over to the other island."

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"Yes! and somebody else is gunning, too!" laughed Charley, as he pointed out the big dog Trimmer, already close upon the unfortunate bird, which was doing its best to escape its pursuer; but without success, for a moment later Trimmer caught its wing in his mouth and turned again for the shore.

"Good dog!" shouted Allie.

"Here, Trimmer! Good Trimmer!" cried Jimmy. "Bring it here, good doggie!"

But the good doggie, however, had not the slightest intention of bringing it there; but lay down, after shaking himself, and began to play with the bird between his forepaws. Whenever one of the boys came near him, he would seize the bird in his mouth, bound off a few rods, and then continue to play with the unfortunate thing, which was still alive, but which no amount of sticks or stones would make him drop, so the boys, finally, went off to get another shot at the flock, before they flew away entirely.

After a good deal of tramping, some climbing, and considerable crawling on the hands and knees, the boys came up to the flock again. This time they were not so successful as before and shot only seven birds. The flock, as Jimmy had said, lighted again nearer the house, and this third time, as the birds were now quite wild, they got only three birds, so that in all the afternoon's sport amounted to twenty-four, and the one that Trimmer still had playing with, which was eventually recovered but in so mangled a condition that no use was made of it.

Greatly elated with their success the boys returned to the house, and laid their spoils before Mr. Murphy and Mr. Godard. As those who had remained in the *North Star* had had so few curlews to eat during their short

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stay on the coast, it was voted unanimously to send them all to Max for dinner next day, which was done at once by the same boat that took Mr. Murphy on board, while the boys remained on shore, with their new found friends, to see what further sport they could find before it became dark.

"Well, boys," said Mr. Godard, coming down the walk to the wharf, where they were all assembled, "what are you going to do, now?"

"We don't know, sir!" replied Allie.

"Well! suppose you help me, here, cast off this boat, and then you all come with me! Jump in, Jimmy, and you, Charley, take the oars, and we'll row to the salmon nets."

The boys did as they were told, and soon all were in, and the boat making for the point just opposite a low, long point of the opposite island, and in the very center of the narrow passage between the two islands.

"This is really the mouth of the river," said Mr. Godard, "and we have set out our nets here on trial, to see if we can get anything. There are plenty here, if we can only strike the right spot for them."

After a short pull, for the distance was not very far, they reached the point and found the nets.

"There's something there, anyway!" said Mr. Godard, "there are seven buoys under the water, and I told the men to haul the line extra taut this time."

The net was made of stout twine, and was nearly three hundred feet long and about twenty deep, of meshes six inches wide. The bottom was kept down by heavy stone sinkers at both ends and in the middle, while the top was fastened to a long rope, which stretched from point to point, across the pass, and was buoyed up with large pieces of cork.

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"I see something glittering down there!" exclaimed Freddie.

"Yes, two or three of them!" said Allie.

The boat approached alongside, and Mr. Godard pulled up the line with his hands, while he extricated a salmon from the meshes, which had caught it around the neck just back of the gills.

"Well, that's not bad!" exclaimed Mr. Godard, as he turned the last fish in the boat. "Six fine fellows. I guess we'll have to send this one," said he, picking up a fine, large one, "on board of the *North Star*, to Mr. Benton. Allie, you can give that to your father with the 'compliments of the season!'"

The boys all laughed, as Allie took the fish and laid it near him in the boat.

"Twenty-four curlew and a salmon ought to make a mess for you all to-morrow," said Mr. Godard.

The boat now pulled for the *North Star*, where it landed the boys, who bade good night, with reluctance, to their companions and Mr. Godard, as they clambered up the side of the vessel, utterly tired out with their day's sport.

"Oh, you good-for-nothing rascals!" exclaimed Max, from the galley; "back again, to torment me for supper, are you?" he added with a pleasant laugh. "Well, I got something nice for you this time; guess what it is."

"I'm too hungry to guess!" said Freddie, with something of a whine, — "yes! I guess 'tis fish."

Max laughed loud at this, but added:

"No, sir! wrong this time; try again!"

"Bread and butter," suddenly shouted Allie.

"Well, now, you are good at guessing," said Max. "You must be hungry, to guess such things as that!"

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"I'll tell you what it is!" said John. "I smell the duck and I see the apple-sauce!"

"Ah, you bad boy," laughed Max. "If you guess what it is you can't have any;" and with that he proceeded to fill the plates and pass them around.

For a time nothing was heard but the cracking of bones, and the suppressed cry for some more, which echoed so often that the supply of duck seemed about to be entirely exhausted, when Max, with a great flourish, opened the oven door and disclosed another one, lying in a huge pan half full of gravy.

"I thought that one would not be enough," cried he, exultantly.

"Oh, oh, oh!" cried each of the boys, in succession.

"There, now!" said Max; "take it and finish it."

About half an hour later there might have been seen three boys, looking like tipsy fellows, struggling down the companion-way to the cabin below, whence they soon sought their berths, and, by nine o'clock, the lights were out for the night, and all was quiet on board the *North Star.*

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CHAPTER XIII.

WHAT MR. FURNESS AND THE BOYS LEARNED ABOUT SEALS.

"WELL, boys! hurry and get up, if you are going ashore with us to-day," cried Mr. Ready, down the companion-way, the next morning, about half-past eight o'clock.

"All right!" answered John, as he sprang out of his bunk, and putting on his clothes, hastened on deck. "Hello! where are we! I say, boys! come on deck, quick! I guess she's dragged her anchor."

"I guess she's dragged it a pretty long ways," laughed the captain, who was standing near the stern rail. "Why, man! we're nearly twenty miles away from where we were last night; we're down to—to—what you call it?" turning to one of the men, who was close by,—"I never can remember these names."

"I think he called it Bradawl, sir," said the man.

"Bradore, Bradore!" exclaimed Mr. Ready, just then coming along the deck, and rubbing his hands smartly together, as if very much elated over some unusual occurrence.

It didn't take long for the boys to appear on deck, and soon the three stood gazing toward the shore close by, and rubbing their eyes very hard.

"When did you hoist the anchor?" cried Allie; "I didn't hear you."

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"Oh! about five this morning, while you were asleep," replied the captain.

"I declare! this is perfectly beautiful!" continued Allie. As he spoke, a light cloud, for a moment, passed across the sun's path and threw a dark shadow upon the green slopes of the high, rocky shore. "How I wish mother and Eva could be here and see this!"

"We'll come up here, sometime, and bring them, perhaps," said Freddie.

"Yes! we shall have to, Freddie."

"And then we will —"

"Get into the boat and sit down," said Mr. Ready, rubbing his hands and bowing very low, chuckling audibly, as he said it.

"We'll go with you after we've had our breakfast," put in John, "and you must go without us, if you can't wait."

"Ah!" replied Mr. Ready, very courteously and condescendingly; "and think, how much you *could* have eaten while you have been talking."

The boys took the hint at once, and started for the galley. A hasty breakfast, and all were ready to go ashore.

"So this is the famous Bradawl?" said the captain, who persisted in his curious pronunciation of the place.

"This place," said Mr. Taylor, "is where the first colony of any importance, of which we have any record, was established. It was then called 'Brest,' and is said to have been founded somewhere about 1508, and soon had about two hundred houses and nearly a thousand inhabitants, with more than twice as many in the summer time, and during the fishing season; but the colony did not live over a century and a half."

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"Do not the fish frequent this part of the coast now, as they did when such a large colony was founded?" asked Mr. Murphy.

"Without doubt," said Mr. Taylor, "the fish then migrated all along this coast, and this was simply the starting point from which parties went out to wherever the fish were most abundant, just as they do now, from some of these large places."

"Are there no remains of any of these houses to be found now-a-days?"

"The last time I was here," continued Mr. Taylor, "I searched everywhere, and could neither find a remnant of any of them nor of anybody who ever did!"

"It is now, then, nearly two hundred and fifty years since the settlement was abandoned?"

"Yes, fully that, and without doubt all traces of it are now finally destroyed!"

"What a field for romance and romantic search lost," sighed Mr. Murphy.

"Come, now," said Freddie, "do tell us something about the discovery of Labrador, Mr. Taylor."

"There is very little to tell," replied the latter. "It was undoubtedly discovered during the very earliest part of our history. The Welsh, Irish, Norwegians, and Swedes, as well as the English and French, all set up claims to its discovery, especially the two latter powers, who have had much contention among themselves with regard to the matter. The old Norsemen undoubtedly visited it about the year 1000. Sebastian Cabot, Cortereal (a Spaniard), Basque fishermen, Jacques Cartier, all visited here very early. We will hope some day to know more of this *unknown region so near our home*," said Mr. Taylor; "but here we are on shore."

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The shore was a small, low island, with several smaller islands near by, and of a totally different character and appearance from the bold, high, rocky coast line directly in front of them, or the sandy stretch of level country at their right.

The island possessed two houses, the one being a small red, hut-like house, and the other somewhat similar, though, as they landed, its chimneys alone were visible over the neighboring mounds of earth and rock.

"Who lives here?" asked Allie, as they jumped to the wharf, where all was solitary and still.

"Sam Jones!" said Mr. Ready, "and he catches seal for a living!"

"Oh, how nice!" cried Freddie; "now we can find out something about the seal fishery, and perhaps take mother and Eva home a sealskin cloak apiece."

"H'm-m-m! Yes — apiece!" returned Mr. Benton, in such a dubious tone that everybody laughed loudly. This noise set several dogs barking very savagely, but, though they eyed the strangers fiercely, and kept up a continual howling, they remained near the house and did not venture to molest any one. The dogs, in turn, started up the inmates or inmate of the red house, who soon appeared at the door, looked out cautiously, and then came out upon the steps, and, in a very shrill voice, invited the party in, while he continually thrashed around him with a long pole at the dogs; they soon slunk beneath the house and disappeared, showing only the tips of their noses, from which issued a combination of growls, snarls, and barks, all the while the group were approaching.

The visitors now entered the house, and seated themselves. The interior of the hut or cabin consisted of a large and a small room. In the center of the back wall

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of the former a huge iron stove sent forth heat enough to fairly roast them all.

The room was poorly furnished, yet contained all that the occupants seemed to need, of the most useful and only the most positively essential articles; yet there was a sort of comfortable, homelike feeling as the party, after leaving the vessel, sat in the chairs and on the wooden benches, and listened to the tales of their host.

Old Sam Jones was a bachelor, and lived all alone by himself, in this beautiful, but remote spot. He was a sort of mixture of a Robinson Crusoe and a hermit, yet his bachelor eccentricities shone out strongly above everything else, and one could readily see that chairs, benches, tables, and even many other smaller articles, were home-made.

"Well!" exclaimed Mr. Jones, when all were seated as comfortably as the accommodations would allow; "glad to see you all, gentlemen. Strangers is rare 'round here now-a-days, and we's allers glad to see 'um!"

Freddie thought, at that moment, that the solemn circle was spread out in a manner well calculated to show each one to his best advantage, and could not suppress a smothered giggle.

"Hush!" whispered Allie, nudging his brother.

"I don't know any on ye, but hope ye're all well; won't any on ye have somefin t'eat, — ken bile the kittle in a minute?"

Mr. Ready, who had been holding back, could now stand it no longer, so he walked on tip-toe up to the old man's back and gave him a hearty slap on the shoulder.

"Well, Sam Jones, how are you!"

Sam started, doubled up his lips as if to blow vigor-

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ously at something, and stared in amazement at the speaker.

"Why, I'm Ready! Ready! don't you remember me! Don't you recollect how you and I dodged the cutter, three years ago, down to Wolf Bay?"

"Well, I declare, now!" said the old man, "he's been shaved sence I saw him, last, and per'aps the cutter did it," he added, with a loud chuckle, as he shook hands with Mr. Ready. "Glad to see ye, but ain't yer looking thin? I guess yer were shaved pretty clean, want yer?" he said, as he touched Mr. Ready's cheek with his finger. "The cutter did his business well," he added, winking very hard at the crowd, while Mr. Ready turned a little red. "I was shaved onct," said old Sam, "but not since I got them things," and he pointed with his long bony finger all around the room; "but as long as ye won't eat anything, come out and see the place."

To this proposition all hands agreed, with eagerness, none more so than Mr. Ready himself, who was perhaps now quite as anxious to get away from Sam Jones as he was before to go and see him.

"How many seals did you get this spring?" asked Mr. Ready.

"Oh, about three hundred — all told, bellamers and old, mostly Harps!"

"How many kinds of seals do you have here?" asked Mr. Furness; "I believe I used to know, once, but I have forgotten now!"

"Oh! we have six or seven kinds; let me see: there is the Harp seal, the male has the figure of a harp on its back; the Hooded seal, with a sort of a hood on his head, and some other little differences; the Gray seal; the Squar Flipper; the Gray or Jar seal; and the Harbor

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seal," said old Sam. "And some say," he added, "that there's another kind, but I don't believe 'um! I've fished nigh on to forty years and never caught a Gray seal, but I've hearn tell on 'um, and perhaps they're here, — but I don't believe that, nuther."

"What ones do you catch?" asked Mr. Furness.

"I ketch Harbors, Harps, Hoods, and onct in awhile a Squar Flipper. The Squar Flippers is big fellows, and we don't get 'um very often, sometimes we shoot 'um on the ice; I shot one last year, and biled thirty-nine gallons of ile out'er 'im. He weighed nigh on to nine hundred pounds, altogether."

"Do you catch many Harbor seals?" again queried Mr. Furness.

"Oh, no! We get a few, now and then, but they mostly goes up the river in herds, and so the folks who lives near the mouths gets the most of them. They is small seal, and mighty purty sometimes. They is spotted all over like a leopard and some call 'um Sea leopards, so I've hearn tell," said Sam. "We can't get only about two gallons of ile out of 'um, and they're small little things, and no 'count anyway," he added.

"So that reduces your catch to two kinds, the Harp and the Hooded seals," said Mr. Furness. "You see it's so long since I was down here I'm kind of rusty on the seal question, and want to get brightened up a little."

"Hump, yes! Suppose you know more than me about it, now," drawled out old Sam. "You Yankees is awful smart, you'll learn more in half an hour than we folks, who do the work, do in fifty years," said Sam, with a sort of half laugh and half sneer; "and then ye won't know as much about it as you did before."

"Well, tell us what you know about them."

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"Well, then!" said old Sam, "it takes three years for 'um to grow."

Here Freddie, as usual, emitted one of his suppressed giggles, but the old man caught him up instantly.

"What yer giggling fer? Yer make a noise just like a young bedlamer calling for its mother!"

"What's a bellamer or bedlamer, as you called them both?" said Freddie.

"Why, it's the young 'un in the second and third year, before it gets to be a 'sadler.'"

"And what's a 'sadler'?"

"It's an old 'un, you youngster," snarled Sam, "ye don't know nothing, and I told ye so."

After this expression of opinion, Master Freddie thought it wise to be still, and let the others do the talking. All this time they had been walking towards the shed, which they now reached.

The interior of the shed was not unlike that of Mr. Godard's fish-house. There were a large number of nets strewn about the floor, or laying in piles in the corners; a huge cauldron resting upon a framework of stone, which showed evidence of a recent fire under it; and, near by, a large number of hogsheads and puncheons, — of the latter, some were full and some empty.

Mr. Furness took up one of the nets and examined it. It was made of very stout cord, similar to that of a small fish-line. Its general make up was much like the salmon nets that they had so recently seen, only twice as large.

"Are these the nets you catch your seals in?" asked Mr. Furness.

"Yes; the seal come along in herds, at certain times of the year, both in spring and fall, and at certain times in the day, more often than others. We keep watch all

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the time, and when we see a herd comin', we begin to shoot, fire our guns, and make all the noise we can, so that the seals will be skeered and keep under the water. Then they don't see the nets, and get tangled in the meshes. The meshes are about eight inches wide, and jest large enough to let the head of the seal in; the seal never thinks of backing out, but always goes straight ahead, so that if he once gits his head in the mesh he is caught. After a time we go out in the boat and kill all them we have caught, by blows on the nose with a big club. A seal ginerally stays under water for only five or ten minutes at a time, but if forced, they will swim long distances without coming to the surface to breathe.

"This," said old Sam, taking a skin from a large roll, and showing prettily spotted and silver white lines, "is the skin of a Harbor seal, one of the kind that live on the coast the year around. This one," taking another, and much larger one, "is of a young Harp, and we call the Harp and Hood seal, 'passing seal,' as they only come in the spring and fall, and pass down and up the coast, according to the season. We git five or six gallons of ile from the passing seal, and they weigh four to five hundred pounds apiece. They feed on young cod, and when we have a good year for seal, it is a poor year for cod, and if the cod are plenty, seals is scarce. The two kinds ginerally come along together, the males don't ginerally come till the females have jest passed."

"Why, you are giving us quite a history of seals, Mr. Jones," said Mr. Furness.

"Well! yer welcome to all I know about it," replied old Sam, "and that ain't much, and 'twont do you no good nuther, 'cause yer won't know it no better when

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I've told yer, and nobody'll believe half I say, — but I don't keer fer that, if yer satisfied."

"Go on, Mr. Jones; we enjoy hearing you talk very much, anyway," said Mr. Furness, "if we don't have anything but your word for it; that's good enough with us."

Old Sam was evidently pleased with the flattery, and proceeded:

"Now when we kill a seal, we haul 'um on shore and skin 'um first; the carcass is salted down for dog meat in the winter. Then the skin, with its layer of fat, is taken and skulped, that is, the fat took off, and the skin put into a barrel of brine or pickle, as we call it, to keep till we want to use it. After that we take the fat, cut it into small pieces about an inch square, throw them into the iron kittle here, and try out the oil. The fat of young seal produces pale seal oil, and that of the old seal dark or straw-colored seal oil, and each kind, by strainin' and other ways, is reduced to two or three grades. Seal skins are used for a variety of purposes, and a good many are used here on the coast for various kinds of clothing, and also for many fancy things."

Old Sam, while he told off all this, stood leaning with one hand on a big hogshead full of brine and skins, some of which latter he then took out and stretched upon the floor for his visitors to see. They were dark, dirty looking, leathery-like objects, without any apparent form or color, and totally unlike the bright, handsome-colored skins previously seen.

While telling off this story, old Sam had added many a quaint old drawl and queer expression, which showed that the main part of it was drawn from actual experience, while a great deal might well have been learned from others, and that the whole was a sort of an oration

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which he had repeated so many times that it had become a sort of machine work with him to repeat it. When he reached the end, however, old Sam hit the puncheon, upon which he had been leaning, a tremendous thwack upon the side with the toe of his boot, and jerked out the sentence:

"And when we git through we sell the stuff, and get the money!"

Then he clanked a few coppers together that were in his pocket, and proceeded to twist off a remarkably large "chaw of terbaccer;" then, saying that "that was all ther was to it," he put his hands into his pockets, marched out, and ordered the rest to "come out now quick," because he wanted to lock up.

Mr. Ready now reached carefully around in his coat-tail pocket and drew out a large piece of "navy plug" and slyly placed it in old Sam's pocket.

"Here, what yer doing?" demanded old Sam, as he swung his arm around with the strength of a giant — for he was a very stout and strong man, if he was tall — until his fingers came in contact with the "terbaccer," which he clutched and examined with the eagerness of an old miser.

"How much more yer got like that, and what's it worth a pound?" he whispered.

"Never mind now," whispered back Mr. Ready, "I'll see yer again. I'm letting my beard grow a bit," he added.

Old Sam looked at him, and Mr. Ready winked very hard, while old Sam winked back and chuckled heartily.

The party now strolled about the place, some collecting specimens; some taking a boat and rowing over to the mainland, where they amused themselves in climbing the

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cliffs and high hills that were on every side; while Mr. Taylor and Mr. Jacobs rowed over to another portion of the shore to try their luck trout fishing in a stream which ran from a large pond, both near by. Mr. Benton returned on board with Jack Ready, while Mr. Ready and Mr. Jones disappeared together, closely linked in each other's arms, and thus the day wore on until evening, when all met together again on board the *North Star*.

"Hallo!" exclaimed John, the group of boys being first to arrive on board, "there come Mr. Taylor and Mr. Jacobs. I wonder if they have got any fish?"

"I'll bet they didn't get a thing!" cried Allie.

"No? there is some big thing laying on the thwart of the boat; I guess 'tis a salmon by its size," added John.

"More like 'tis a codfish," put in Freddie.

"Humph!" said Allie, "where would they get a codfish, — on shore in the bushes?"

Freddie was silent at this correction, and waited for the boat to approach, which it soon did.

"Yes; 'tis a salmon!" shouted John.

"No; it's a big trout," cried Mr. Taylor in exultation, as he handed him carefully to Max; "and it took me over half an hour to land him, and here are the rest," at the same time he handed up a string of about a dozen good-sized speckled beauties. "I caught the big one and two others, and Mr. Jacobs caught the rest, but I would rather have taken the big one than all the others."

"I say, Max," shouted Mr. Taylor, as Max disappeared in the galley; "can we have the little ones for supper? They are so much better fresh, you know."

"Yes, I'll cook them for you," replied Max.

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The noise brought Mr. Benton on deck, who examined the big fish very carefully, and applauded the "fine catch."

Then Mr. Furness, Mr. Ready, and Mr. Murphy appeared, and shortly afterward supper was announced.

After supper old Sam came on board to see the vessel, and do a little trading with Mr. Ready. He brought with him two very prettily spotted sealskins, which he gave, one to Mr. Ready and the other to Mr. Benton.

Freddie was quite disappointed when he found that they were the hair and not the fur seal, and that he could not take home a cloak to Eva and his mother.

"Never mind," he said, "Eva shall have a great black-backed gull stuffed, and mother shall have a duck."

An hour afterwards and the boys were fishing for tom-cod over the side of the vessel, and hauling them in so lively, and such big ones, that the captain let one of the men clean the largest of the fish, and salt them down in a barrel; before darkness stopped their sport, the boys had taken over thirty large fish, besides an endless number of smaller ones, that had been all thrown back again.

Mr. Murphy and Allie had great sport to see which would catch the most. They came out even on fourteen, and then Allie had a streak of luck that took him up to twenty-three, when he could catch no more, and Mr. Murphy closed his record at fourteen, with a sculpin to end off with.

Thus the evening wore away, and the sun sank lower and lower until it had disappeared behind the distant hills, and left only a faint glimmering of gold near the horizon.

"What makes us see the sun for so long a time up here?" asked Freddie.

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"Why, don't you know that the difference in latitude makes the difference?" said Mr. Taylor, who happened to be standing near.

"But why is it?" persisted the boy.

"Don't you remember that the days are longer and longer the farther north you go, until you get far enough to see the sun all day, 'the midnight sun,' that one of our writers tells us about, as visible in the extreme north of Norway? And in the very far north or south, at the poles, in fact, the days and nights are about equal, of six months' duration each," replied Mr. Taylor. "We are so far north that we have very long days in summer with long twilights, and very short days in winter. I have seen to read in books at ten o'clock by the twilight alone, and it is quite light about three o'clock in the morning. You will study about these things, and the reasons for them, some day."

While Mr. Taylor was speaking, a faint light was gathering in the sky overhead, which had now assumed the form of a broad, undulating band or belt, extending nearly across the heavens from northeast to southwest, and a little less than half way to the zenith.

"Look at the Northern Lights!" cried Allie.

All bent their eyes in that direction, while the strange light, disturbed by the activity of its own peculiar phenomena, began to vibrate, to coil and uncoil, fold and unfold, wax and wane, to move and shift about in all possible curves and gyrations, as gracefully as if it were a banner or streamer waving in the breeze. At that moment the attention of the group was called to the unusual phosphorescence of the water about them, as stirred by the dippings of the oars of a boat which was just leaving the vessel's side.

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"How perfect!" sighed Allie, "and mother and Eva cannot even see a picture of it."

"Nor anybody else, now," added Mr. Ready, who was standing near.

The boys hastily gazed upward. The band had entirely disappeared, leaving in its place only a multitude of short, straight lines, shooting upward towards the zenith of the heavens; soon, too, these disappeared almost wholly, leaving the night dark nearly to blackness, and the display was over.

"Come, let's go to bed," said Allie.

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CHAPTER XIV.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

ALL things must have their end at last; and the delightful stay in "Labrador," of four weeks of sunshine, rain, and fog, also had an end; and one bright, pleasant morning, about five o'clock, of a day toward the latter part of August, the captain's order came, clear and loud:

"All hands up anchor for home!"

And what a lively time of it they all made. It seemed as if the men never worked harder or sung more cheerily, as the anchor chain rattled and clanked twice as lively as ever before. Then one after another the sails were set, until, with full canvas, the *North Star* shot from its harbor into the uncertain waters of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and the homeward voyage had begun.

"Well, boys!" said Mr. Benton, "pack up your things, and let the mate store them away in the hold; we may see rough weather before we get to land!"

"Aye, aye, sir!" came the sailor-like response, and immediately boxes, barrels, and trunks were paraded on deck, and *packing* became the order of the day.

"I say, Allie!" exclaimed Freddie, "have you locked the alcohol box?"

"Yes, long ago! and it's stowed away down in the hold before now."

"Have you labeled it?"

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"No! I must do that, and then it can go on by express right from the boat."

"Oh, John!" exclaimed Mr. Taylor, "did you see anything of the cover to my barrel of trout? I think it was around here this morning."

"It is nailed on to the bottom of the barrel, sir," said one of the sailors, who was standing near; "shall I take it off and head up the barrel, sir?"

"Yes, if you please, and then I will label it, and you can stow it away down in the hold."

"Ah! Jack, where is that fresh salmon that we got last night?" said Mr. Ready.

"The cook has it, and is going to boil it for dinner," replied Jack.

"No he isn't!" exclaimed Mr. Ready, somewhat testily — "Ah, Max!"

"Yes, sir!"

"You keep that salmon for to-night; it will relish better, with the egg sauce, for supper, and cook the chowder for dinner; the codfish will not keep so well as the salmon."

"All right, sir, just as you say!" replied Max's cheerful voice; "and will you go and see Master Tod, sir, who is very sick?"

"Why, certainly!" said Mr. Ready, as he hurried off and down the forecastle.

Master Tod, since the accident by the pistol, had been in the hands of Max, who alone, among all in the ship, could make him mind; he had by this time become quite proficient in the art of cooking, — as blacks often do, — and had won golden opinions already for his talents in the cooking line, — Master Tod, I say, from eating too much while on shore and in port, was now

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suffering terribly, or imagined that he was, from "mal-de-mer."

Mr. Ready soon came on deck again, and reported that a little of the liquid part of the chowder, at dinner, would probably be of greater benefit in the case than anything else he could think of, and then disappeared down the cabin — at the same time the jovial face of Mr. Murphy and his meerschaum pipe appeared coming up the companion-way.

"Has anybody seen my pipe case?" asked Mr. Murphy, in a very excited and husky tone of voice.

"Why, Mr. Murphy!" exclaimed Allie, "how hoarse you are! what is the matter?"

"I've lost my pipe case!"

Allie whispered, in a very hoarse whisper:

"Is that what affects your voice, Mr. Murphy?"

"Oh, no! got a cold."

A loud roar from Allie was his response to this self-evident answer to his question; which was repeated as the unfortunate Mr. Murphy, who was tugging away at his handkerchief, brought it out of his pocket with a flourish that sent something black, that had been the cause of its clinging so tightly to the inside of the pocket, over the side of the vessel into the water.

"There it goes!" said the doleful whisper; and Mr. Murphy, looking and speaking more like a ghost than a man, actually rubbed his eyes two or three times with his handkerchief, as he gazed disconsolately toward the pipe case, now floating away, far behind them, "and it cost me thirty-seven cents!"

Another roar sent Mr. Murphy down into the cabin, in a great huff, while the word galloot echoed back strangely from the companion-way, then all was silent.

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"Well, boys!" exclaimed Mr. Jacobs, half an hour later, "I suppose that everything is packed away by this time."

"Oh, dear, no!" sighed Allie. "I only wish that it was."

"Why, then," said Mr. Jacobs, "are you waiting around here, if you have more work to do?"

"We've only been waiting for a few moments," replied Allie; "we've been working hard since breakfast, and 'tis now eleven o'clock; won't you give us time for recess?"

Mr. Jacobs laughed heartily at this, but replied:

"I hope you will get your things packed away soon now, for I fear that it is going to be rough weather, and the sailors want the baggage stowed away down in the hold before it comes on!"

The boys then continued their packing, and soon had boxes, barrels, and trunks, all nicely and snugly stowed away for the bad weather, in case it should come.

The collection of plants numbered nearly one hundred varieties and a large number of specimens of each variety; some forty species of seaweeds, and nearly as many lichens; some twenty or thirty different kinds of mosses; and their collection of birds, and birds' eggs, fishes, and sea-animals of all kinds.

"Quite a collection," said Mr. Jacobs; "boys, you have done well!"

"Our big box, three barrels full of bottled and dried specimens, and a trunk!" exclaimed Freddie. "What a fine time we will have unpacking, naming, arranging, and cataloguing!"

"I'm afraid that you will have to do more looking on than anything else," said Allie; "you never can get any

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named right, and you never spell the names right of those you try to catalogue. You made seventeen mistakes once, in half a page, and so I am afraid we must count you out."

"Yes," retorted Freddie, "I'll look on, and see you pick out the right synonym!"

Allie now looked sheepish, as he remembered the mistakes he had lately made over these synonyms, but he only said:

"Well, Freddie, we won't say anything more about it, and you *may* help all you *can* when the time comes."

All the boys were now pretty well tired and hungry. Dinner soon came to their relief, and the captain, hauling the log, reported, "forty-three miles since starting — pretty good for an old fishing vessel, but the *North Star* is good for more yet!"

"Dinner, gentlemens!" cried a welcome voice from out the galley door.

"It is really surprising!" said Mr. Taylor, in a very sprightly tone of voice, as he rushed with the others toward the galley; "'tis really surprising how eagerly the boys crowd about the galley door, — I wonder what can be the cause?" at the same time Mr. Taylor was doing his share of the crowding, and also calling quite lustily, for "some of that chowder, Max, if you please!"

"Yes, sir, in due time," said Max, as he handed Mr. Taylor a brimming plate of the same.

"I think that *I* will try some of the chowder," said Mr. Benton, smiling serenely, as he made his way through the crowd with so much energy that it suddenly parted, to the imminent peril of half a dozen plates of the hot

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liquid, leaving him a clear passage way to the galley door, "just to see what it is like!"

"*I'll* have some more," said Allie, smacking his lips, "to see what it is like!"

"It's a comfort to see my soup go so well!" exclaimed Max, as he dished out the last ladleful into Mr. Murphy's plate, while Freddie stood looking perfectly aghast, with an empty plate in his hand, just as he was about asking for more. "How lucky it is that I made two kettlesful," added Max, with a smile. Freddie's face assumed its natural position once more, as his plate was filled from the hot kettleful.

At length, both dinner and dessert were disposed of, and one by one all sought the cabin again.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Allie, "nothing to do now until we get home, how tiresome! All this lovely trip to end soon, now!"

"Never mind, Allie," said Freddie, sympathizingly, "we'll go again, next year, and have a better time, and collect twice as much. Let's think of what we will do when we get home. How are we to get our things through the Custom House? I heard Mr. Jacobs tell papa that he was afraid that we would have to pay duty on some of our things."

"Don't be afraid of that," spoke up Mr. Furness, "they never charge duty on Natural History specimens."

"But my sealskin," persisted Freddie, "that's not a Natural History specimen, it's real fur."

"And my otter and martin skins," said Allie, "shall we have to pay duty on those?"

"No," said Mr. Furness, "the duty is off, now, on undressed furs, and unless those skins were made up into articles to wear, such as hats, gloves, and such, you

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will not be obliged to pay anything on them; and besides, I have a friend in the Custom House, amongst the officers, and I guess he will help us!"

At that moment the captain appeared at the companion-way door, to say that as a squall was approaching, somebody had better "make all close in the cabin; it's only a small one, I think," he added.

In a short time everything was made secure, and on came the squall. The sailors hurried in the sails and made all fast above, while the wind began to whistle, and the rain to fall in torrents; but, as the captain had said, it did not last long, and soon the black cloud was seen far astern of the vessel, and the sky around them became clear once more. The crew hoisted the sails, and soon the vessel was again under full canvas, pressing forward on her homeward course.

On the third morning, after calms and fair winds, when the boys came on deck they were surprised at seeing all the men on the ratlines eagerly surveying the horizon in the direction in which the ship was sailing. One man, who was standing aloft, was pointing with his finger in the same direction as the others were looking, and trying to talk to one of his companions a little below him on the shrouds; but his voice could barely be distinguished at the distance at which he was stationed, so that the boys could not understand a word that he said.

"What is it?" demanded Allie of a man who was just on the point of ascending the shrouds.

"Old Reuben says that he sees land over there," said the man; "we must be pretty near Bird Rocks by this time."

Half an hour later, a faint, dim shadow clouded the

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horizon a little on the starboard bow of the vessel. It looked more like a small cap of smoky cloud than anything else, and as such Allie, who happened to be on deck at the time, took it to be.

"Looking at the land?" asked one of the men.

"Land!" said Allie; "where is there any land? I thought we were way out in the Gulf."

"Yes; so you are," replied the man, "but that is Bird Rock just the same."

"See that funny cloud over there," said Allie.

"That's land," again replied the man. "That's the top of Bird Rock, and if it was in the night we would see the light on the top."

Allie rushed down into the cabin to communicate the agreeable intelligence that Bird Rock was in sight, and nearly every one immediately came on deck to see the still faint shadow of its summit in the distance.

"How soon shall we reach it?" asked Allie.

"Oh, some time this afternoon," said the captain, who was standing near.

It was about three o'clock when the vessel came near enough to the rocks to see them clearly, and an hour later she was hove to, near the rocks, while a boat was lowered so that all who wanted to could visit this renowned place. The water was rough, but no one minded that; and so many wanted to go that the captain was obliged to use his authority, and say that they must either take the men's places at the oars and row the boat or else not go. Mr. Furness and Mr. Taylor offered to row, and so all could go, even to Mr. Benton. As both Allie and Jack Ready had guns, they were seated, one at the bow and the other at the stern, and, all being in readiness, the boat left the vessel and headed for the rock.

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Bird Rocks are two large rocks, situated not far apart, and in the center of this portion of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. They are tall and precipitous, flat on the top, and quite formidable looking. The sides of the big rock are so steep that the people who live in the solitary lighthouse at the top are obliged to go up and down by means of a sort of hoisting machine that acts over the ledge.

The waves broke all around the base of the rock, so that there was scarcely a foot of landing place, and people went up and descended, from and to the boats, which usually anchored directly under this ledge.

The face of the rocks was everywhere covered with white masses, which proved to be the guano from the innumerable number of birds that covered every footing place on the rocks, and flew above and around the water in perfect clouds in all directions.

"Those are all, or nearly all, gannets," said Mr. Ready, "and for this reason the rocks are often called the Gannet Rocks."

All the while the boat was approaching nearer and nearer the island. The birds flew around the boat in every direction. At last Allie and Jack Ready began to shoot, and in a very short time secured eleven beautiful birds, six being old ones of a beautiful white color, while the other five were young birds and brown. As no one cared to make the experiment of ascending to the top of the rock, after rowing about for a time and chasing one or two birds that the boys had wounded, the boat returned to the vessel, and all came aboard once more.

"Well, that is sport," exclaimed Allie, as he viewed with pride the immense birds that had been shot. "I'd

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like to stay and shoot them all day; only 'twould be too bad to shoot so many and do nothing with them when we had got them," he added.

"We have nine good ones to stuff," said John.

"Oh, yes; and we could clean and stuff the others if we wanted to," said Allie.

The best of the birds were then picked out, the blood and stains scraped from their feathers, and then laid carefully aside to be made into skins.

This process occupied the next day, and on the next, the fifth day out, land was sighted, which proved to be the eastern extremity of Cape St. George, and by evening the *North Star* had entered the mouth of the Strait of Canso, and anchored for the night.

"Come, boys; let's go ashore," cried the captain, laughing and rubbing his hands, so happy was he at the idea of being so near home.

As the water here was very shallow, and, being so far within the bay and straits, quite calm, the boat with the boys, the captain and one of the crew glided along as calmly as if in the securest haven, and soon reached the shore. The beach was composed of sand and rocks, while the latter, in large irregular pieces, extended far into the sea. After landing, and securing the boat to a huge rock near by, the party moved off to stroll about for an hour or so while the twilight lingered.

Back a little from the beach, the grassy bank of the sloping terrace descended, though low fir and spruce trees were everywhere intermingled. The captain and sailor took one of the many cow-paths, in which the place abounded, and were soon lost in the woods; they reported afterward following the path to a farmhouse where they were regaled right royally with fresh milk,

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and a supper of boiled eggs and fried bacon. The boys were less successful, though Allie contended that a bat which he succeeded in shooting, and a field mouse which his brother had caught, fully made up to him anything that he might have lost by going to the farmhouse; while he made, furthermore, the extraordinary statement that he had "much rather find a rare specimen than eat, any day."

In the evening, after supper, the boat again left the side of the vessel, and the whole party went on shore and assembled at the farmhouse to talk over and hear the news. Few of the farm folks had any news, though an old gentleman did possess a copy of a Halifax paper, which was eagerly read by the assembled company, one acting as reader, and all the rest listening. When they returned to the vessel, a boat load of the farmer's people went with them and visited the vessel. Here, in pleasant conversation, the evening passed away, and night came. By half-past nine o'clock, all had turned in, and the lights had been put out.

And now the party were nearing home. The first comer on deck the next morning found the *North Star* already nearly half-way through the Straits. The wind was favorable, though there was not much of it. The tide was weak, but growing stronger — that too was favorable.

Soon the lighthouses at the western entrance of the Straits began to appear, and slowly to draw nearer, while the vessel kept steadily on its course, and slowly passed them one by one, till, clear of them all, it entered the broad Atlantic.

"Well, boys," exclaimed Mr. Murphy, the next morning, as they assembled for breakfast, "we're on the

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homeward stretch at last. Four days, if the wind holds good, and we see old Boston town again; then for a good, solid beefsteak," he added quite emphatically.

"Humph," ejaculated Freddie, "I'd rather not have mine very solid."

"No, you sha'n't," exclaimed Mr. Ready, who was standing near. "You shall all of you have the best dinner that the best place in Boston can afford, and I'll pay the bills."

A loud shout followed this declaration, in which the men passengers joined quite as lustily as the boys, showed the approval with which it was met, and then breakfast was announced.

"Four hundred and eighty miles more to go," said Mr. Benton, as the last lighthouse on the Nova Scotia shore disappeared in the dim distance. "Four days, allowing one hundred and twenty miles a day, in which to get home. Let me see," he mused; "we started on a Tuesday, and to-day is Sunday. If we have good luck we will reach Boston about Thursday."

"Then we can get home the same day," exclaimed Freddie. "How nice that will be!"

"We might have a big storm and go to the bottom long before that," said Jack Ready.

"Yes," exclaimed Allie, somewhat nettled, "if we do, as the sailors say, *you* are the Jonah, that will have caused it all, we will throw you overboard first."

As Master Ready had nothing more to say after that, he wisely held his tongue.

So on, on passed the pleasant hours. Sometimes the weather was rainy and cloudy, and sometimes it was calm and hot; most of the time, however, it was quite

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pleasant. The wind often blew hard, but never so that the sails were reefed for a moment. One night a squall struck the vessel, and there was lively work in the cabin for a few minutes, but it did not last long.

The third day out the captain hauled the log and computed the distance as three hundred and ten miles. This would leave one hundred and seventy more to make. The next day the wind blew strong and steady, and at night the vessel had made a hundred miles more, leaving now about seventy. The following day was somewhat calmer than it had been any day on the passage, yet when evening came every one strained their eyes to see who should discover the first light on the land that all knew could not be far distant.

As usual Allie's bright eyes caught a glimpse of something in the distance, and was the first to shout "Light ho!" But no one else could see it, and though a sailor went high into the rigging and remained there a long time, looking intently in the direction pointed out, he came down and said that he could see nothing. A few moments later Allie again shouted "Light ho!" but, as before, no one else could see it, and Allie was laughed at all around; yet he persisted. The man at the wheel had twice shifted the wheel a little to allow the sails to catch more fully the wind, which now came in irregular gusts, and at this moment he shifted it a third time, when, lo! in the very direction pointed by Allie, came the clear, sharp white light of a lighthouse into full view of every one. The universal hooray that went up, as a kind of triumphal shout, rang through the ship, and brought everybody on deck to see the first signs of "land." That, to the sailor, loved and always longed for sight! "Land!" Land! yes, only a few more miles, and

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land and home once more. At that moment a voice started up, loud and clear:

"Home again! home again,
From a foreign shore,"

and all joined heartily in the old song, until the ship resounded with the homely melody from "stem to stern."

The sail up the harbor, against a strong ebb tide, into Boston, occupied nearly all the next morning, and it was noon before they made fast to the wharf.

"Just in time for dinner," exclaimed Mr. Ready, who had been on the pier talking to one of the custom house officers, and a band of very respectable looking gentlemen and boys issued from the cabin, where an hour before had been a crowd of dirty and torn-clothed sailor tramps, and hurrying on solid ground once more, started off on the dead run — at least the boys did — for Parker's.

An hour for dinner, an hour more for getting baggage ready to go home, and ordering the express, and hearty hand-shakings and good-byes, and each took his way.

Five o'clock, at a station not twenty miles from Boston, a large carriage and span of horses were awaiting outside the depot, for the approaching train. An elderly woman and a bright-faced young girl were on the front seat back of the driver. The horses pawed the ground as the train approached with its dull roar, shrill whistle, and cloud of steam and smoke issuing from the engine; while one of the car windows was open and filled so full of four faces that there was hardly room for anything else to be seen in it.

"There's mother and Eva," sang out a clear voice in one direction, at the same time a ringing shout; and

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"there's papa and the boys," sounded from another, and in a moment they were clasped in each other's arms.

"There," as all crowded into the carriage, and the horses sprang forward under the crack of the driver's whip, "now tell us all about it," said Eva.

And so they did.

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PART II.

CHAPTER I.

THE SHIPWRECK.

"CONFOUND this fog! One can't see the length of one's hand away," exclaimed a short, thick-set, round, burly fellow, all bundled up in thick clothing, with a low, wide-brimmed felt hat on his head, a heavy pair of boots on his feet, and a pair of mittens on his hands, to a tall, lank man, with sandy side whiskers, a light overcoat with the collar turned up about his neck, a sailor's old rubber hat on his head, and a similar pair of boots and mittens on, only the mittens were so badly filled with holes that he was obliged to keep continually pulling them, first with one hand then with the other, to cover the exposed fingers.

"Confound this fog, I say! We'll run aground in this beastly hole before we know it, if we don't look out, and then there'll be the mischief to pay; if we get off with our lives we'll do well."

And the little man held up first one foot then another, as he shifted his body from one side to the other, and clapped his hands together to keep up the circulation in them.

The tall, lank man with sandy side whiskers sidled up to the short, round, fat man, and leered over at him till his hat almost put his eyes out, and rolling his tongue in the side of his cheek, replied:

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"Oh, yes! Fog — ugh — cold!" each word being repeated with a short pause after it and before the next word.

The little, round, fat man, and the tall, slim man then teetered up and down, first on one foot, then on the other, much like a pair of hens when surveying some fine garden patch, and rubbed their hands and slapped them against their sides, as they swayed to and fro with the pitchings and turnings of the little vessel upon the angry waters.

At that moment a head and face bobbed up the companion-way, and almost instantly bobbed down again, while a small boy's voice was heard to exclaim:

"Oh, my! it's all fog so you can't see hardly anything!"

There must have been quite a number of people in the cabin, to judge from the sounds of laughter which followed the above announcement.

"Well, go and look for yourselves, then," said the voice again, "if you don't believe me. You go to see."

"We are at sea already," exclaimed a voice from one corner of the cabin; "we don't care for any *more* of it. The question *now* is how to get *out* of it and *not* 'go to sea.'"

"Well, you know what I mean," again exclaimed the first voice.

"Yes, you mean all right," said the voice from the corner. "Now sit down and let somebody else have the floor."

At that moment the vessel gave a big lurch, and all hands went down in a heap into one corner of the cabin.

"There's plenty of floor now for all who want it," exclaimed another voice from the middle of the heap.

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"And all seem to want it," said a fourth voice, as the vessel righted itself and as quickly pitched over on the other side, leaving the company sprawling over each other into the opposite corner at the other end of the cabin.

A hearty laugh followed as each one picked himself up, and proceeded to regain his seat.

At this moment a trumpet-like voice sounded down the companion-way, causing everybody to start.

"Look out, down there! We are liable to be wrecked at any moment!"

A grand rush on deck followed this announcement, and the party, consisting of three men, three boys, and two ladies, hurried out of the cabin and on deck in a tremendous flurry of excitement, and began crowding at once up to the captain.

"Now keep calm, all," said the captain, patting the air gently with his hand. "All keep calm."

"Humph!" exclaimed the eldest of the boys, "it don't look much like the wrecks we read about, at any rate. Why, the sea is as smooth as a wash-basin, except for a few waves now and then," continued the speaker.

The sea was indeed remarkably smooth, only tossing with an occasional long swell which pitched the vessel sideways or end for end, as she happened to be pitched toward or away from the approaching wave. Nothing was in sight, and everything enveloped in a dense fog which surrounded the vessel on all sides.

"The vessel looks more like a big giant pulling the sheet over him in bed just before going to sleep, than like a shipwreck," said the smallest of the three boys.

"I guess it will be pulling a sheet of water over the vessel in the bed of the ocean," laughed his companion at his side, "if she should happen to strike a rock."

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"You see," continued the captain, "that we have drifted about in this fog so long, that nobody knows just where we are. We might as well speak the truth. These long swells prove that we must be somewhere near land, yet we can't tell anything about it. If we strike land or a rock we go to pieces as sure as fate. So, as we are liable to do it at any moment, though we may not do so at all, we better be prepared for the worst at once."

"Very true," said a large, elderly gentleman, close by.

"What shall we do, mother?" exclaimed the younger of the two women, who had drawn closely to each other while the men were talking.

"Trust in God, my child," replied the elder. "Always trust Him:

> "'Fear not, but trust in Providence,
> Wherever thou may'st be!'"

"You all better go below and pack up your bags," said the captain. "Take only the most necessary articles, for if we go to pieces we can't save half we would like, probably. I'll attend to the boats."

The company hastened below to carry out the captain's instructions, while the captain himself hurried aft and soon had all the crew on deck at work clearing away the boats and storing them with provisions and a barrel of water for each, together with sundry coils of rope, cooking utensils, and two large pieces of sail-cloth, which they had drawn from the hold.

While these operations were going on, the captain and the tall, lank individual with the red whiskers, who proved to be the mate, were impatiently walking the deck, and intently watching the water or gazing into the impenetrable fog, talking to each other occasionally,

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though for the most part silently watching the men fill the boats as they had been instructed.

"I say, Captain," said the youngest of the three boys, coming up behind the mate and the captain as they walked the deck; "I say, Captain; what makes you think we are in danger of running on the rocks?"

"It is always well to provide for the worst," replied the captain, "and it is the worst which I strongly fear," said he.

"And why?" persisted the young boy.

"Well," said the captain, "see that long, low wave?" pointing to the crest as it advanced toward them on the left of the ship.

"Yes."

"Well, that kind of a wave shows that we are very near land. It comes from off the shore, and a rocky shore, as it is not in one long line, but several broken parts of the same line. Then see the same kind of a wave on the other side of the vessel? Well, we must keep on as we are going, heading right on, between the two, and then either come out all right or bring up suddenly on the rocks at the head of the bay. We can't very well anchor here, as it is too deep and the tide is running too strong. So there we are!"

As the captain said this the vessel gave a heavy thud as if it had touched bottom.

"There we are, indeed," yelled one of the sailors, who had overheard the captain's remark.

All hands jumped in an instant, and were at the vessel's side looking over and around them on all sides, as well as into the water, striving to penetrate the fog, — but the vessel kept on as steady as before.

"How's that?" roared the captain. "Peters, didn't

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you sound a few minutes ago and report 'no bottom' at forty fathoms?"

"Aye, aye, sir!" exclaimed Peters.

"Well, sound again, then," said the captain.

Peters sounded again, and reported, as before:

"No bottom at forty fathoms, sir."

Forty fathoms was the end of the sounding line, and the captain looked over to the mate as he said:

"Extraordinary, I declare!"

Then he turned, after ordering a sharp lookout, and, making his way to the companion-way, hurriedly descended the steps to the cabin. Then he went to his own state-room, drew out a small hand-bag, stuffed a few clothes and other necessities into it, and, grasping a chart in the other hand, rushed out again into the main cabin. Taking off his watch, he laid it on the table, as he put on a suit of oil clothes, when a voice shouted down the hatch-way:.

"All hands on deck, instantly! The boats! the boats!"

Leaving his watch on the table, with the bag in one hand and the chart in the other, the captain sprung on deck. Even in that short five minutes what a change of scene! Before the captain had reached the deck the vessel came to a standstill with a thud that threw everybody off their feet, while the prow was suddenly raised high into the air between two low, black rocks with sharp ragged edges, which seemed to close on it like the claw of some immense sea monster; at the same time the stern fell so low as to be partially submerged in the water.

By this time the men had launched the boats into the comparatively calm water, and were tumbling the bags, etc., which each one had brought on deck, into them.

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A few moments more and all had crowded into the three boats and were pulling fast into the fog, leaving the now helpless ship in the claws of the monster rocks on each side of its prow, and the waves to wash into the fast filling cabin, a wreck, on an unknown shore.

It was but a moment more before the cry of land ahead was made, and almost immediately the boats were dashed through the surf, with their own velocity and the strength of the waves, to a beach covered everywhere with rocks and huge bowlders, and at the foot of an embankment about three feet high, on the top of which was a grassy slope.

With great difficulty, while the waves dashed, and the boats threatened every moment to upset, all were finally landed, bag and baggage, on the plat above, and the boats drawn closely up to the bank, beyond reach of the waves, and their painters fastened to the rocks, while the men clambered up the bank, and proceeded to wring the water from their wet sleeves and legs.

"Thank God 'tis no worse," exclaimed the captain, a sentiment in which all seemed to concur.

"I guess it didn't take *over* ten minutes," said the mate, who was standing near.

The captain seemed fumbling away at his coat for a minute, then exclaimed:

"By gracious! my gold watch and chain and pencil have gone, anyway."

"What?" breathlessly asked one of the party.

"Yes," repeated the captain, "I took it off while I put on my oil clothes, intending to wind it and put it back and fasten it more safely, and then came off and left it on the cabin table."

At this moment a huge wave struck the beach heavily,

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and shot its spray completely over the little group, reminding them that they might just as well move a few rods farther away from the edge of the beach. This they quickly did, and then began to look about them to see what was next to be done to render their situation more comfortable, and to see, also, what sort of a place they had landed upon. The fog still enveloped everything, so that it was next to impossible to do anything, so all hands turned to, cut a number of upright poles, and proceeded to drive them, at given distances apart, into the ground. When they were made fast and firm in their places, cross poles were placed from one to the other and tied down firmly with coarse twine, found in one of the boat's lockers; then one of the large pieces of canvas was drawn over and found to pretty effectually cover all but the back and front of the extemporized tent.

The men then carefully drew the boxes into this temporary abode, and ranging them on one side, covered them over with the other piece of canvas, thus making a capital seat for the ladies, who were glad to avail themselves of this opportunity to escape from the wet and sit down in comparatively dry and comfortable quarters.

The rest of the goods were also brought in and safely stowed away, until all were under cover.

After some repeated attempts and failures the boys succeeded in building a large fire, just outside of the tent, in spite of the rain or rather mist from the fog, which showered down upon them, and soon its grateful warmth was appreciated by those within the tent, while having none of the ill effects of the smoke and smell of the burning wet wood.

"There, mother, if that don't warm you up well, I'll have to set the tent on fire," laughed one of the boys, as

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he rubbed his hands and danced around the fire with great glee; "I guess you'll get dried now."

"I think I shall," replied his mother, from out of the tent. "It is really very comfortable here now, I assure you. I wish one of you boys would bring me some water; I think your sister would like some, too."

One of the boys ran straightway to the boat and soon came back with a small tin cup filled to the brim, and handed it to his mother.

His mother took the cup and drank a few swallows, then handed it to the young girl by her side, who also drank a small quantity and returned the cup.

"Now where's your father, Eva?"

"Here he comes with the captain," said Eva.

At that moment they entered the tent, and sat down on some boxes, just opposite the ladies.

"How comfortable you are, madam," said the little, round, fat man, alternately rubbing his hands and holding them out toward the fire. "How fortunate we are to secure so good a shelter. Boys! boys! don't let the fire go out."

"No, sir," they replied, from the outside. "We'll collect a pile of wood just outside the door so as to keep the fire going."

And suiting the action to the word, they all began to bring armfuls of pieces which were abundantly strewed about the beach, just below the bank on which they sat. They had soon raised a pile, on the back of the tent, which reached nearly to the top, and extended several feet away from the bottom.

"There! there's enough to last till to-morrow, anyway," cried one of the boys; "now we are off to investigate the country," and away they started.

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"Don't go far away or be gone long," cried out their mother, as they disappeared around the corner of the tent.

"I don't believe they heard what you said," exclaimed the young girl whom we have called Eva.

"Risk them for being back by the time there is anything ready to eat; though, as for that matter, I *do* hope that the men will find out something about where we are, before long. It would be interesting to know it, even if we were on an island. Yet, somehow, I think we *must* be on the mainland. At any rate, if some one does not come and report soon, I shall go off on an investigating tour myself," said the captain, rubbing his hands and smiling in spite of his rather long and serious looking face.

"And, pray, shall we not *both* go out, a short distance only, for the fog is too thick to allow us to go far, and see for ourselves what there is to be seen?" asked the other gentleman.

"Well, yes, we might," replied the captain, "but as six stout men have been out and around for over half an hour, and three boys have just gone, and it would be very ungallant to leave the ladies without *any* protection in case of, say a black bear or a robber suddenly appearing," and here he nodded and smiled at the ladies; "I think we ought to remain here yet for a time at least, and attend to their wants," he continued.

"Very good; I yield to your opinion," replied the other gentleman, "and doubtless the ladies will also be glad of our company."

"Do stay here and rest yourself, papa," cried Eva, "I am sure that it will do you good to keep still for a few minutes."

All were obliged to laugh at this urgent request, im-

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plying as it did, though, of course, unintentionally, the rather restless nature of her father's spirits.

"There, Mistress Eva," exclaimed the apparently irritated parent, "I am greatly inclined to go out now in very spite."

"Then I do not think *I* shall accompany you," said the captain, laughing. "I am sure that madam's company is much preferable to that of this damp fog, at present."

"I see I must remain, then," replied the parent. "I cannot allow you the privilege of remaining snugly behind with the ladies while I investigate the fog. It would never do in the world! So I remain in spite of myself."

This caused a hearty laugh all around, almost immediately interrupted by the entrance of the boys, followed by two of the men, who came to report that a small hut, evidently recently inhabited, had been discovered not half a mile distant, and though poor, and rough, was evidently far better than the open tent which they then occupied; that two of the men had remained behind to wash and clean it up, and that they were prepared to transport the goods there, if such was the good pleasure of the company.

Of course such *was* the good pleasure of the company, and while the men were hunting up two long poles and nailing two small cross pieces to them, to make them serve as a hand truck to carry the baggage on, the boys were busy loading themselves with small goods; and as soon as the truck was loaded, the men led the way, while all followed.

The path led through an open grass patch for some rods, then began to ascend among rocks and huge bowlders, till they had climbed quite a hill. The path itself

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was smooth, though its surroundings were so rocky and irregular. Then they came to another opening, which led directly to the house. It was a rude, low cabin of about one story and a half in height, and with two rooms each above and below.

"Well, this *is* comfortable," exclaimed Eva, as she ran into the now clean and nearly dry room, which had evidently been scrubbed with care, and the door and window left open to air it out. "This *is* comfortable. *I* greatly like being shipwrecked, if we are to find such comfortable quarters as these. I say, mother, sit down. This stove looks old, and somewhat rusty, but I will warrant that it will make a cheerful fire for all that."

Suiting the action to the word, Miss Eva proceeded at once to open the stove door, and prepare to make a fire. Her brother helped her by going out and gathering an armful of small pieces of wood, and then putting them in the stove they soon had a fine blaze roaring and crackling as it ascended the chimney.

The captain stood by, laughing to see the enthusiasm of "the young castaways," as he called them, and then began to prepare a seat for the ladies.

Meanwhile the men came and returned, bringing bundles and articles from the tent, and finally even the tent itself, and the woodpile which the boys had collected a short time before.

"There we are," said the mate, who just then stepped up to the door. "All right and tight, my hearties! ready to begin over again!"

"The fog won't let us see anything yet," said the mate, "but I have just come from the shore, and judging from the sound of things there won't be much left of the good old *Sea Foam* by to-morrow morning!"

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"I fear not," said the captain. "It don't look reasonable, at any rate."

"She seems to be pounding away as if she were on the ways, and twenty ship carpenters at her," added the mate.

"Yes, and how much of her do you think we can save?" asked the captain.

"None, if the sea rises and the fog continues," replied the mate.

"Well, we will hope then that the sea will not rise, and the fog will not continue," returned the captain.

"Amen," said a voice from the corner of the room, where the ladies were assembled.

At that moment the cook appeared and proceeded to arrange the cooking utensils on a shelf, just above the stove, and to make a pot of coffee.

The coffee being started Max drew out the low, long wooden table from the further corner of the room, and soon had rubbed and washed it clean. Then he brought out a large tin panful of ships' biscuit or hardtack, and put it on the centre of the table; the plates were laid, and the cups produced, and in less than fifteen minutes all was ready for eight hungry, shipwrecked persons, who were not slow in doing full justice to the repast.

While they are eating, a few words of explanation are due to the reader.

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CHAPTER II.

AN UNKNOWN COUNTRY.

THOSE who have read the first part of this story will not fail to recognize their old acquaintances Mr. Benton, and the three boys — John, Freddie, and Allie. The two gentlemen are no other than Mr. Taylor, who accompanied the boys and their father, and now acted in the capacity of tutor and instructor; and a friend of his, Mr. Bemis. The captain is Mr. Ready, the cook Max, and the three other seamen, called Peters, Stebbins, and Barney, with Mr. Cooper, the mate; these comprised the whole of the party.

It is just a year since Mr. Benton and his three boys, accompanied by Mr. Taylor, then a stranger, taking the trip for his health, had joined an excursion, under the guidance of Mr. Ready, to the coast of Labrador, then an almost unknown region, but one which was fast becoming known to the public, both as a fishing-station and as a good place for pleasure parties to spend the summer in fishing, hunting, and having a good time generally.

Mr. Benton had been so delighted with the trip, and with the prospects which, as a shrewd business man, he had foreseen for a traffic-trade with the people, that he had this year chartered a vessel, at his own expense, fitted it out with provisions, dry goods, and other articles useful to the inhabitants and their business, the "fishery," taken his wife and daughter Eva, Mr. Taylor, for

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whom he had contracted a strong friendship, as tutor and companion for the boys, Mr. Bemis, who had assisted him in fitting out his vessel, as supercargo; and then induced Mr. Ready to serve as captain and pilot. Max had been hired again as cook, and the remainder of the crew belonged to the vessel itself. Though we have said that Mr. Ready was captain, the mate, Mr. Cooper, was the real captain of the vessel, though he allowed Mr. Ready, whom he well knew, to act in that place while he acted as his mate, and Mr. Barney, the real mate, acted as a common seaman with the others. This plan had been agreed upon and was now in force.

The *Sea Foam*, a staunch schooner of about two hundred tons, was a Canadian vessel, carrying the English flag. Having fitted out in Boston, the party had started for Labrador in fine weather, high spirits, and with good prospects for a fine trade with the fishermen along the coast. Mr. Benton intended to return again in the fall; some time during the last of October or first of November, if possible.

The party had been out eleven days when they became enveloped in the fog; after beating about for two days, the vessel had suddenly been wrecked, as described, on a treacherous bed of rocks, with deep water all around them, only a few rods from the shore. It was "lucky it had been in the day time," as the captain had well said.

It was now fast growing dark, and as yet there were no accommodations prepared for the ladies for the night. There had been nothing saved from the ship, in the shape either of beds or bedding; and the probability was that,

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by this time, everything had become drenched if not actually flooded in the cabin, though it will be remembered that the prow projected far above the rocks, and consequently out of reach of the water. It was thus probable that, if she had not already gone to pieces, the men could rescue the bedding of the forecastle bunks. As the vessel had been entirely refitted before leaving port, and a plentiful amount of insect powder scattered everywhere, besides the abundant scrubbing which every part of the vessel had undergone, the chances were that this bedding would serve as a bottom, with some extra covering, for the ladies' bed, provided it could be obtained. To secure it, then, the mate and two of the seamen, taking one of the boats, started for the vessel.

The good old *Sea Foam* could be just seen, in the distance, as a mere dark object in the bank of surrounding fog.

"The fog seems to enclose it," Freddie said, "just as a jelly-fish does a smaller fish," and the resemblance was very strong.

The boys stood on the bank and watched the men launch the boat and get into her, while the mate began to bail her out.

Two strong men at the oars soon carried both boat and men into the fog, in the direction of the "food for the jelly-fishes," as the boys called the dark form of the schooner, and in a few minutes they were entirely lost to view.

After trying in vain, for some minutes, to pierce the darkness, the boys turned and began building a fire out of the brands of the old one made in the morning, to serve as a beacon for the men when they should return, and thus doing, and gathering sticks for the same, they

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occupied themselves until the boat arrived from the wreck

The men, after leaving the shore, pulled swiftly and steadily for the vessel.

It took but a few minutes to reach her, and then, in a moment more, all had clambered up over the side of the abandoned schooner. She was situated much the same as she had lain, after striking the rocks, except that the prow had become lifted somewhat farther on the rock, thus lowering the stern, which was already several feet under water.

The men found no difficulty in entering the forecastle, and though everything was pitched forward against the partition which separated the forecastle from the hold, they quickly secured all the bedding. It had not been touched by the water, nor greatly injured by the dampness of the fog, as the hatches had been closed. They soon had it tied into bundles and packed into the boat. A partially empty barrel of flour, and a small barrel of corned-beef, and another of pork were lowered in also, and a hasty survey soon showed that nearly or quite all of the ship's provisions could be saved the next day, provided the vessel did not go to pieces in the night, and the water still continued calm.

The men rowed carefully back to the shore, where the fire, which the boys had built, served to excellent advantage.

After thoroughly warming themselves, the men proceeded to carry the provisions, by means of a hand truck, up to the house, while the boys followed, loaded down with the bedding. The latter was soon spread out around the room near the stove, that it might thoroughly dry, and a large fire was kept up for several hours, at the

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end of which time all traces of moisture had seemed to have disappeared.

There was no time to improvise a bedstead, even of the roughest kind, and as the wood itself was wet, the rain having begun to fall, Eva and Allie moved two of the beds into the smaller room and soon made them up, one for her father and one for her mother. She was obliged to make all the beds single, as the mattresses had been obtained from the sailors' bunks, and were of a small size, suitable only for one person. Then she made up a bed in the opposite corner of the room for herself.

Mr. Taylor and Mr. Bemis, with the captain and the boys, made up their beds out of the four remaining mattresses, laying two together for the three men to use crossways, and two for the boys. The sailors climbed the stairway to the loft, where they had soon spread the large sail-cloth tent, now quite dry, and proceeded to make themselves comfortable for the night.

Luckily the weather was not cold, so but little clothing was really needed. Before retiring, however, Mr. Benton summoned all hands into the dining-room, and, when all were seated, he opened a Bible which he had brought with him, and read an appropriate passage, after which he uttered a fervent prayer of thanks for the safe deliverance from the great danger that had threatened them, and for aid to guide them in the future, which no one knew or could foresee. Then all retired for the night.

The ladies and the men fell asleep almost at once, but with the boys it was far different. The novelty of the situation, the excitement of the day, and the reality of the catastrophe that had occurred, kept them awake for a long while after the others had gone to sleep. Occasionally they would converse with each other in the

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lowest whispers, and all consented that it was "perfectly splendid." Freddie even went so far as to hope that they would be obliged to stay there "till winter," and Allie didn't care if they stayed all winter. At length John declared that he was going to sleep, and a minute later he was fast in the land of dreams, and, alas, really snoring. After several unsuccessful punches in the ribs, John stopped his snoring, probably for a few moments only, and the other boys in their turn fell asleep.

It was quite late the next morning, and the sun was streaming in at the windows, when Allie, the first to awake, raised himself on his elbow, rubbed his eyes hard with his fists, and then, after opening and shutting them several times, to be sure that he was awake, sprang up, waked the other boys, and hurried out of the door. The noise aroused the rest of the down-stairs sleepers, and a quick call from the captain started the men in the loft, and the noise thus becoming general, soon aroused the ladies and Mr. Benton; so that in five minutes everybody was awake.

Just at that moment a loud exclamation from Allie brought every one to their feet, and to the door.

What a sight lay before them! No wonder that Allie gave an exclamation! Neither pen nor pencil could do justice to the scene that lay spread before the astonished beholders.

The fog had entirely disappeared, leaving the landscape perfectly clear and well-defined against an almost cloudless sky; the vegetation, alternating everywhere with sand, rocks, craggy cliffs, and a few dwarfed trees, had been turned by the rain into a heavy, dark green, and was loaded with morning mists; while the sea extended everywhere in front, with islets dotting the water

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here and there. A deep bay, surrounded by cliffs and rocks, reached far inland just below them; and irregular patches of green foliage, scattered here and there among rocky hills, extended far upward back of them. The air was still, and the water unruffled. Thousands of gulls flew above and around in all directions, or poising upon the water itself, buoyed up by their downy feathers, swam about, dived for food, or remained stationary. Birds of many kinds appeared on the water a little way from the shore, and large flocks of plover on the beach itself. Here and there a huge seal would rear its head for a moment only. But what interested the men the most, was, just below them, at the left, two huge, pointed rocks, rearing aloft their terrible peaks, between which, fast as if in a vise, was the prow of the once gallant, now disabled *Sea Foam*. No other rocks were near them, dark water all around them, and just off shore. The vessel would have been safe had it veered a rod either to the right or left of where it struck.[1]

"Well, boys," exclaimed Mr. Benton, interrupting the silence; "a beautiful situation indeed! Garden of the Gods! And not a house in sight."

Mr. Taylor shrugged his shoulders slightly, and laughed, saying in an undertone, apparently to himself:

"Yes! 'a beautiful situation, and not a house in sight!' Are you not slightly sarcastic, Mr. Benton?"

"Not at all, sir," replied that gentleman. "All the summer and plenty of food before us, and a good eminence over yonder," pointing as he spoke to the height above, "from which to hang our signal. Surely we are

[1] In this exact situation a vessel was recently wrecked on the Labrador coast, to the writer's knowledge, from personal observation.

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not out of the path of all vessels for the next six months. I therefore repeat it, sir! A beautiful situation, and not a house in sight. How could we better choose a summer at the seashore, and rough it for a few months?"

The reply seemed so unanswerable, that Mr. Taylor could not help replying:

"Well, sir; I am sure I do not care, if you do not!"

This sentiment was freely echoed by all the men and boys, and even Mrs. Benton and Eva joined in the general expression of willingness to abide here for the present.

"Well," exclaimed Mr. Benton, "as we came with an eye to business, who knows but that Providence has guided us here expressly for that purpose? We will spend a few days in investigating the country, and, everything permitting, we will set up our own fishery, do our own fishing, trade with ourselves, and trust in Providence to get home again. If no vessel comes for us we will build another, out of the remains of the *Sea Foam*, and go home in her. Let me see," he continued, "the *Sea Foam* was of two hundred tons, and my friend, Mr. Constance, came to this same coast in a seventeen ton vessel, so I guess we can get back safely before winter."

Though in many things Mr. Benton was very eccentric, he was, nevertheless, a shrewd business man; calm and cool on all occasions, always ready to make the most of his opportunities, and generally successful. When he laid down the law, everybody took the cue at once, and never attempted to question or to dispute him.

On the present occasion Mr. Benton laid down the law, and everybody, even Mr. Ready, the captain, at first stood aghast, then nodded assent; then followed Allie, enthusiastically and instantaneously, as he swung his hand

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around his head and shouted out a rousing, "Three cheers for ourselves! Hip, hip, hurray!" And loud it rang over the hills and dales of old Labrador, rebounding in faint echo from the distant cliffs to go in lesser and lesser waves over the ocean far out to sea.

Mr. Benton gazed affectionately at Allie, for a moment only, then turned, gave a few words of instruction to the men, and saying cheerfully, "Come, let's get something to eat," turned into the house and was hardly known to speak three words for the next as many weeks.

Max was quickly at work making the coffee boil, and soon coffee and hardtack, with some fresh biscuits, from a small package of self-raising flour, found in the flour-barrel, where Max had himself put it only a few hours before the shipwreck, presented a very appetizing repast to the almost famished company.

"I declare," exclaimed Freddie, "'tis too bad that we haven't got some butter."

At that moment Max entered with a plateful of the very article, which he had just taken from a tub of the same which had been brought over in the boat the day before.

"You wait," said Max to Master Fred; "give me time to try this stove, and we will see what shipwrecked mariners can do."

"Up to your old tricks of threatenings again, Max?" laughed Allie.

"Yes, sir," exclaimed Max. "I'll threaten some dough with a pan of hot lard; that's the kind of threatenings that I'll do."

"Oh, Max," screamed Eva, "*dough nut* do it!"

"Oh, my!" groaned Allie; "Oh, oh, Eva! help! murder! fire! Max!"

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"What is it?"

"Can't I have another biscuit?"

"Why, yes; two if you wants it."

The biscuit were produced, Eva taking one of them, and harmony was soon restored.

"Now, Eva," said Fred, "don't do that again or I shall never get through eating."

Eva promised, and soon, all having finished, the room was resigned to Max till dinner time.

The men having eaten their breakfast from a wooden bench, just outside the door, had already gone off to look after the wreck, and so the family were left alone and together to form plans and see what was next to be done.

The hut occupied by the family was in tolerably good repair, and had probably been recently occupied by some fisherman and his family. It was situated on a small patch of grass land, about fifty feet from the surrounding water of the bay. The same slope continued to the crest of the ridge some hundreds of feet above.

At the bottom of the slope, toward the bay, a small, broken down stage extended several yards into the water, and a small shed gave probable evidence that fish were to be caught not far from the vicinity, out in the sea beyond.

John was soon to be seen, far upon the ridge above the house, waving his hat impatiently, apparently to the rest of the boys, to come and join him.

Fred and Allie, with Mr. Taylor, Mr. Ready, and Mr. Bemis, were soon clambering the height, in desperation, to see who would reach the summit first. Strange to say, the short, fat, jolly Mr. Ready was the first to reach the height, though he did it some distance away from the rest by an oblique path which reached a spur of the hill

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somewhat lower than the rest; yet all were soon standing together and admiring the scenery before them.

"Well, boys," exclaimed Mr. Taylor, rather sarcastically, "'a beautiful situation, and not a house in sight.'"

"All points and islands and bay," cried Freddie, in enthusiasm.

"Yes," said Mr. Ready, "'all points and islands and bay,' on three sides of us. What is inland, I wonder?"

"Bears, I suppose," exclaimed Allie.

"Rocks, I guess," said Freddie.

"Trees and thick bushes," put in John.

"A goodly mixture of all, *I* guess," said Mr. Taylor, as they turned to descend.

The path leading to the top of the hill was small and narrow, winding through low shrubs and stunted spruce and fir trees, and over thick, gray moss which allowed one to sink, at nearly every step, from eight inches to a foot deep; sometimes it led over rocks or along the foot of some huge bowlder, and in one place through a large patch of dark mud, evidently once a pool of water, but which had since dried up. Freddie soon found that the shrubs and stunted spruce and fir, though hardly waist high, were so twined and interlaced that it was almost impossible to walk among them, as he had been trying, so he gave it up and returned to the path again. Then he tried the moss, with not much better result. It looked safe enough, but a single step upon it and he sank down nearly to his knees in it, yet it was so elastic that it returned to its natural position once more, and looked the same untreacherous carpet of gray moss as before. Then the black mud of the dried up pool seemed hard and dry, that surely was safe to walk upon; but into that, at the first step, he sank nearly six inches, and had it not been

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for a large clump of grass he would have been unable to cross at all.

"I don't like this kind of walking one single bit," exclaimed Freddie.

"Nor nobody else," replied Mr. Ready, "though I guess we will have to take it as it comes. It's like all the rest of the walking about here."

This was dismal intelligence to the boys, who had looked forward to long tramps and grand inland excursions.

"I don't care if it *is* all like this," exclaimed Allie, "provided there is a path like this."

"There isn't always a path like this, unfortunately," said Mr. Ready.

"I'm not going to borrow trouble," replied Freddie, "there'll be enough of it come without our hunting it up or calling it."

"Oh, oh!" cried Allie, "look!"

And he immediately plunged into the midst of the bushes, and proceeded to wade rather than walk in the tangled mass to a cleared space, a few yards beyond, where he gathered a large handful of curious looking weeds.

"Well, what are they?" asked John.

"Pitcher plants," replied Allie. "Look at the pitcher-like leaves!" and he held up a tubed leaf, about six inches long, hollowed and curved gracefully.

"I did not know that they grew so far north," said Mr. Bennis, stopping to look at the strange leaf and curious flower.

"Oh, yes," answered Mr. Taylor, who was standing near, "I have seen patches of them large as a quarter of an acre, almost."

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"But I didn't know that they grew up here," continued Allie. "I'll take these home to Eva and mother."

Continuing the descent, Freddie frightened a small sparrow from its nest, but he did not touch the eggs, of which there were four. Allie also came across another curious flower, which he found on a side bank of a little pool of water. It was very small, and the leaves, growing in a cluster about a small upright stalk, looked like little paddles, clothed with a reddish sticky substance, and each leaf was fringed with a row of small bristle-like points growing from its outer edge; altogether the plant was hardly three inches high, and the leaves an inch in length.

"Don't you know what that is, boys?" said Mr. Taylor, taking one up and looking at it carefully.

"It looks like that queer Southern fly-catching plant that Uncle George brought to mother last winter," said Allie.

"This is the sun dew; there are two species, and doubtless both are to be found here," said Mr. Taylor; "look out for another kind, and see if you can distinguish the difference."

With these treasures the boys soon reached the house.

Eva was delighted with her presents, and immediately began to clear a small patch of damp ground, back of the house, for a "flower-garden," as she called it. A fine stream of water flowed through the patch, and there was a little dryer bank, though of the same dark earth, somewhat grassed over, above it. Here Eva planted her sun dew on one side the stream, and the pitcher plant on the other. Allie had saved the roots of both plants, so that in a few days they were growing as well as if they had never been plucked and transplanted from their native beds.

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"There," exclaimed Eva, when she had finished her task. "Now you may bring me as many different kinds of flowers as you like, and I'll plant them all here, and have a garden."

Just then Eva heard her mother calling her, so she ran to see what was wanted, while the men and boys proceeded down to the beach.

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CHAPTER III.

UNLOADING THE WRECK.

"BOYS, boys," called out Mrs. Benton from the doorway; "I wish you would tell Mr. Ready that I should like to see him."

"Present!" cried Mr. Ready, who, being near enough to hear what had been said, turned and went towards the house. "Well, madam, what can I do for you?"

"I was merely going to ask you," said Mrs. Benton, "if one of the men might not try to put us up a rough bedstead before night. I think I should sleep much more comfortably if I could be raised a short distance from the floor."

"Certainly," said Mr. Ready; "I will ask the mate to attend to the matter at once."

Then he hurried to the beach, where a boat had at that moment landed from the wreck, and found that the mate and one of the seamen had been after a load of supplies for the house. Among other things Mr. Cooper had brought his tool chest, and, though too busy himself to attend to the matter, he readily consented to let Mr. Ready use the tools; so the latter, having nothing else to do, got one of the men to help him carry the chest to the house, took off his coat, rolled up his sleeves, and went to work like a born carpenter. By evening, with diligent use of saw and plane, hammer and nails, he had erected a very fair bedstead, and corded it with

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a small cord brought from the wreck. He had also arranged a cot-bed for Eva. And great was the delight of the family when they surveyed the very comfortable bedsteads which Mr. Ready had turned out. Of course they were rude affairs, but they were very comfortable nevertheless. This was Mr. Ready's work for the day. Let us see what the others had been doing.

The shed on the end of the wharf, by the water's edge, was a low building about fifty feet long, twelve feet wide, and twelve feet high, with a loft half way between the floor and the roof. Mr. Cooper's first work was thoroughly to repair this shed, and shingle the roof, several thousand fine shingles having been in the cargo of the *Sea Foam*. The wharf was also straightened, and made more secure in various ways, while several large plank that lay near by were added to it to make it more solid and durable.

While these operations were going on, the great work of the day, and of many days, was also in progress, — namely, the removing of the goods from the wrecked schooner.

The water was perfectly calm, so that the boat loads could be brought at once directly to the wharf or stage head, and, being landed, quickly removed to the shed. After breakfast, all three of the boys and Mr. Bemis volunteered their services in aid of the mate and sailors.

The three boats were soon in active service, and the party hard at work laboring to remove the stores.

The stern of the *Sea Foam* was so far submerged that the cabin was entirely flooded and under water; but so stout was the partition between the cabin and the hold, that, as yet, hardly a drop of water had touched the cargo. When the hatches were opened, therefore,

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great was the delight of all to find everything safe and dry, and thus the work of transportation could at once begin.

"Five men and three boys, with three boats," cried Allie, "ought to do some work to-day."

"Yes," added Freddie, "I guess we can soon lighten the old *Sea Foam*, and perhaps get her off the rocks too."

"If we can get out all of the cargo, excepting the timbers and house frame and boards at the bottom, then she can go to pieces if she wants to, or rather if she has to," said the mate.

"I say, Mr. Cooper," said Allie, "don't you suppose we really *can* get her off?"

"Well, now, Master Allie, I should not like to say 'yes,' and I should feel it unwise to say 'no.' It is safe to say there is about one chance in a hundred of such an event occurring."

"If she hasn't pounded a hole through her bottom before this, she has done well," said Mr. Bemis.

"Yes, I think so, too," replied the mate; "a hole in a vessel is repaired comparatively easily in almost any other place than on the forward part of the bottom."

At first it was thought best to strip the vessel of her sails and cordage; but, strangely enough, the mate was influenced by Allie, who pleaded so earnestly, that it was at length decided to empty the hold first, and give the boy the benefit of the one chance of again floating the schooner. The mate himself was rather in favor of this one chance, for he looked with mournful eyes upon the almost certain prospect of losing the *Sea Foam*, that gallant vessel which had borne him to so many ports, to be finally cast away on an unknown and uninhabited shore. The order was then given to rig the tackle, and

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soon the men began to hoist the articles, which were on top of the cargo, into the boats.

Great was the delight of the boys when the work of removing the articles in the hold commenced. None of them, of course, wished for any serious danger or deprivation, but, as boys, making the most of everything, even of disaster, now that disaster had really occurred, each showed the spirit of a young Crusoe upon his desert island, and all worked, as the mate said, "like young beavers," the rest of the day.

By noon the boats had been from the vessel to the wharf twice each. As there were three boats, this made six loads. Much of this material consisted of empty barrels, wood and coal, a small coal cooking-stove, taken from the galley; sundry coils of rope, large and small, pieces of sail-cloth, and an endless variety of odds and ends of rigging and articles of necessary use on ship-board that were valuable and necessary to be preserved with great care. These had all been stowed away in the shed, when the workmen were called to dinner.

Max had provided an excellent bean soup for the occasion, and the men did full justice to it, their unusual exertions making them hungry.

For the family's dinner, Mr. Taylor had profited by the morning's fine weather, and succeeded in capturing a nice mess of trout, from a small pond, from which trickled a little brook, which finally found its way into the sea, back of the house about half a mile. Having established the fact that there were trout near by, Mr. Taylor seemed to come at once into a state of extraordinary good nature, and, throwing away his usual sarcastic manner, was quite communicative and even pleasant for the remainder of the day.

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After dinner the work on the wreck continued.

Allie was now so thoroughly possessed with the hope of saving his beloved *Sea Foam*, that he could think of nothing else. The mate, indeed, laughed at the idea.

"But, Mr. Cooper," said Allie, "even you must confess that the few loads of the morning have made enough of a difference in lightening the schooner to raise the cabin roof clear above water."

Mr. Cooper started for a moment, as he seemed to realize that what Allie had said was really true; and even the sailors themselves seemed now, for the first time, to note that the cabin roof was no longer beneath the water.

"We can tell better by and by," was all that Mr. Cooper ventured to remark, however, and so the work went on, slowly but surely, of removing the cargo of the *Sea Foam*, and storing it away in the ample shed at the rear of the wharf.

Meanwhile the boys chatted with each other like young parrots.

"I say, Allie," said Freddie, "this doesn't seem much like a shipwreck, does it?"

"Not at all," replied Allie; "in all the books I ever read, either the vessel went to the bottom, leaving the crew and passengers on a small raft, with nothing to eat, and sharks all around them, and wind and rain, to drift a thousand miles or so to land; or the vessel went to pieces on the rocks, half of her goods were spoiled and the other half went to the bottom, and they had to live in a tent until they had discovered a cave to stay in."

"Yes, and not always as good as that," exclaimed Freddie. "I think *this* is just fun, for if we don't get the *Sea Foam* off somebody will be sure to find us here and

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take us off. I only hope that they won't come too soon."

"That's the bother," said John, "they will be taking us off before we've begun to stay here half long enough, and that will spoil all our sport."

"No," said Allie, "I'll tell you what: yesterday everybody abandoned the schooner and called her a wreck; to-day they are taking out all the cargo and carrying it on shore; just before we commenced work this morning the mate said that the vessel couldn't be saved. Now if she gets off, and we can get her into the water again, I'm going to claim her, and we'll all take her and cruise about and turn pirates. Mr. Stebbins and Mr. Barney say that I can, and that they'll go with us. That will make five, and I guess we can manage the schooner alone."

The boys all laughed, and did not seem to notice that Mr. Barney and Mr. Stebbins looked rather red and confused, and hung their heads, or that Mr. Cooper looked unusually stern and displeased at something; nobody said anything, however, and soon all were talking and laughing as if nothing had happened.

"I-e! i-e! i-e!" sung the men as they hoisted upon the tackle in drawing a huge hogshead of molasses out of the hold. "Steady there!" shouted the mate; "don't let her slip, or you'll break the cask and spill the whole."

"I-e! i-e! i-e!" continued the men; "up she comes!"

At that moment, just as the final hoist was necessary to bring the hogshead clear of the hold, somebody's hands slipped. The weight before had been almost too much for the men at work at the tackle; this catastrophe made it altogether beyond their control, and with an

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ominous whir-r-r-r the rope slipped, and before it could be belayed down went the big hogshead with a crash on a barrel of pickles and a barrel of flour that happened to be directly beneath it. By great good fortune the molasses cask remained unhurt, while the barrel of pickles was smashed, and the flour barrel was crushed to atoms. The flour flew in all directions, and the pickle brine trickled slowly into the bottom of the vessel.

"Oh, ho!" cried Freddie, "boys, come quick! did you ever see the cucumber flower?"

All laughed heartily at the joke, and as soon as an extra hand had been put on the tackle fall, the molasses hogshead was safely landed in the boat, and the spoiled portions of the flour and cucumbers, the most of the latter being unharmed, were gathered up and cast overboard.

Slowly the barrels of flour, biscuits, pork, beef, meal, and other goods were raised and lowered into the boats.

The men took turns at loading them and rowing them to shore, so that those who rowed the last boat, on returning would work at the tackle, while those who had been to work at the tackle would row the boat to shore. As the weather was fine, everything was left just where it was landed, to be put into the shed, after supper.

Everybody felt the necessity of working day and night, while the fine weather lasted, in collecting all the stores possible; for if a rough sea should set in, the good ship would go to pieces in a few hours.

At length a long, loud blast of the fog horn, which Max had appropriated for a dinner horn, was heard sounding over the waters by those at work at the vessel, and all were glad when the mate gave the word, "all hands quit work for supper!"

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The last boat load was rowed to the wharf, the barrels taken out, and all hastened to supper.

"I declare!" exclaimed Fred, as the boys entered the dining-room together, "I feel as if I had worked a week, and was hungry enough to eat twenty-one meals."

John declared that one good one would be enough for him, and that for his part he guessed that the dough Max had talked about in the morning, had been in the kettle of hot lard, and that doughnuts were the result.

Max had, indeed, prepared a good supper for the hungry boys. The hot coffee filled the room with its rich aroma, and the usual dish of hardtack, which graced the center of the table, remained almost untouched, there were so many other good things. As John had predicted, there was a large pan of fresh doughnuts and a nice plate of cheese; huge slices of cold corned beef, and even mustard for a relish for it; and new fresh biscuits and nice butter.

"I'd rather be cast away, than stay at home," said Freddie, in a perfect ecstasy of delight at the prospect of such a bountiful repast.

"So had I!" exclaimed Eva. "And Freddie," she continued, "you don't know what quantities of new, pretty flowers Mr. Taylor brought me and helped me plant in my flower-bed!"

"I don't see the connection between supper and your flower-garden, Eva," remarked John, dryly. "I prefer the supper, just now."

"Humph!" said Freddie. "Come, Eva dear, you shall show me the flower-garden *first*, then I'll eat my supper."

John and Allie looked rather foolish, but sat down

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and began eating; Eva looked gratified, and taking Freddie's arm, the two went out to view the new plants.

There were, indeed, several kinds. Two apparently different species of small white, delicate flowers, resembling pinks, a very small, but most beautiful pink flower, with a delicious odor, and several other pretty plants, all of which seemed to be doing well, and had not wilted, though they had been planted early in the afternoon.

"I tell you, Eva, what I will do, bye and bye," said Freddie.

"What is it? Do tell me!" cried Eva.

"I'll get a lot of shingles, cut them in two, point them, and lay you out a pretty garden."

"Oh, oh!" cried Eva, clapping her hands. "How nice that will be! What a good brother you are! I'll kiss you, Freddie," and she reached up her head and arms and gave her brother an affectionate, sisterly smack, then clapped her hands in great glee.

"Ah, ha! what's this! Heighty, tighty!" cried Mr. Benton, just then coming around the house; "making love, hey?"

"No, no, papa! Only Freddie is awfully good to me," replied Eva.

"Well! he'd better be if he knows what's good for him," faintly murmured Mr. Benton, as if to himself, as he disappeared around the other corner of the house.

And now, all having arrived, they sat down to the supper which Max had provided for them, and partook of it with the greatest relish.

"Well, boys!" exclaimed Mr. Benton, "have you unloaded the poor *Sea Foam?*"

"Oh my, no!" exclaimed Allie, with such an emphasis that all laughed, "not nearly, nor hardly half!"

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"That's good grammar," put in Freddie; "'not nearly, nor hardly half.'"

"Well!" exclaimed Allie, "they all know what I mean."

"Not always!" exclaimed Mr. Taylor, slightly smiling. "Your impetuosity of speech often carries you into the unknowable; you ought really to be more precise in your methods of enunciation."

Allie said nothing, but the doughnuts disappeared with such surprising celerity as to call forth another correction from a still different quarter.

"Oh, dear!" cried Eva, "I do believe Allie is going to build himself a pen!"

"What!" said John.

"A pen!" Eva repeated.

"What's that for?" said Freddie.

"So that he can turn into a little pig," laughed she; "he has eaten four doughnuts, while I have been doing my best to eat one, and I only wonder we don't hear him grunt."

"Ugh, ugh, ugh!" said Allie. "Just one more doughnut, Max, if you please."

"Two more if you want them," said Max, good-naturedly.

"No, one will do, thank you!"

"Well, madam!" exclaimed Mr. Ready; "I congratulate you on your pretty curtains."

Mrs. Benton had, with a small roll of figured calico, made ruffled lambrequins to her windows, and hung, from each side, long curtains, which were fastened back by narrow folded bands of the same material about one-third of the distance to the floor, so that the lower third hung gracefully down and lay trailing for several inches on the floor.

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"I think we *have* progressed well, to-day, in our house-keeping arrangements," remarked Mrs. Benton. "We have done our best, at all events. And you, Mr. Ready, have greatly added to our comfort, I do assure you!"

"Ah!" said Mr. Ready, pleasantly, pursuing his conversation, "let me see! four windows here and two in the bedrooms, it must have kept you quite busy, madam!"

"Yes!" smilingly nodded Mrs. Benton. "Two bedsteads and numberless little necessary improvements."

Mr. Ready nodded his head, smiling pleasantly, and Mrs. Benton did the same, each acknowledging the delicate compliment. After supper all arose and proceeded out of doors, while Max sat down to his supper with the mate, who had just come in.

For a few moments, the two ate in silence, then the mate said:

"Max, a few words in confidence, I know you are to be trusted. What's the matter with Stebbins and Barney? Have they hinted to you, at any time, or have you ever heard, that they were dissatisfied with any one or anything?"

Here he told him the conversation of Allie on the boat, and of the confused looks of the men.

"Why, no!" exclaimed Max, "I think it is nothing, but I will have my eyes out for sparks, I will find out if anybody."

"Yes, I know your power among all the men," replied the mate, "and that is why I thought I would mention the subject. I do not myself suppose that it amounts to anything, but you can tell probably in a day or two."

Having eaten supper, the mate returned to the wharf

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to help the men in storing away, in the shed, the goods they had just taken from the wreck.

There were barrels of flour, graham and Indian meal, and several of oatmeal; corned beef and pork; dried beef, bacon, and ham; boxes of canned goods, meats, vegetables, and preserves; several hogsheads of molasses; one or two barrels of fresh fruit; barrels of both white and brown sugar; and several crates of cheap crockery. Mr. Benton had loaded his vessel with abundant supplies, at the suggestion of Mr. Ready, who had formerly conducted, quite successfully, several trading expeditions of his own, to the northeast coast of Labrador, and he was therefore in an excellent condition to be cast away, and even to live luxuriously and enjoy the situation, provided his stores could be saved. This was now highly probable. A few more days of good weather, and all would yet be saved; the supplies in the schooner's hold would be safely stored in the shed on shore; and everything put in a condition to begin the real work of the season, which Mr. Benton had decided to pursue. In fact, short and comprehensive had been Mr. Benton's orders to the men, on the afternoon of the wreck, and a single sentence comprised the whole. Mr. Benton had said: "Get all the goods out of the wreck and store them in the shed, and then go to fishing."

"Then go to fishing!" repeated the mate to himself, fully understanding the words and all they implied.

"Well! if the word is fishing, fishing it is," soliloquized Mr. Cooper, as he walked slowly toward the wharf, to see to carrying out Mr. Benton's orders.

"Well, my hearties," said Mr. Cooper, as he reached the open door of the shed, "let's see where we can put all these things, now that we have landed them."

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As all the barrels and boxes were labeled on both ends with the names of their contents, it required very little time to pack them away, no attention being paid even to getting those of a kind together, as there was much more yet to be brought over, besides a large quantity of salt in bags for the preservation of fish. This latter, should the fish prove abundant out in the bay, could all be put to practical use. With the men at hand the three boats would easily be manned for the fishing, and the boys could also help in the work of cleaning and preparing them after they had been brought on shore. Mr. Cooper had not yet said a word to anybody about the nature of Mr. Benton's communication, so, really, there were only two persons who knew what his future plans could be.

In a few hours all the barrels and boxes were stowed away safely, the shed door securely fastened with padlock and key, and the latter taken up to the house and given in charge of Max, and again the shades of night began to fall upon the poor, unfortunate, shipwrecked beings.

Poor, unfortunate, shipwrecked beings indeed! Wherein were the first two adjectives exemplified? Here was a family, shipwrecked on a strange coast, in danger of losing everything and perhaps their lives; and behold the same, almost as well established as if they had lived there all their lives, in the midst of plenty, and doubtless the means near them of returning home again in the fall laden with the products of the country in addition to the very stores they had taken out for stock in trade. Not such a very bad showing, after all.

"Well, men," cried the mate, "I guess you'll all sleep well to-night. It is eight o'clock; the time is yours now for twelve hours."

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"Mr. Cooper," said one of the men, Peters by name, sidling up to the mate with a most serious face, "Mr. Cooper, sir, could you give us a leetle tobaccer and one or two pipes to replace our old ones, sir?" asked Peters, in a loud whisper.

"Why, certainly," replied Mr. Cooper, concealing a smile, and a few moments later Peters returned from the house with his hands and pockets full. Great was the delight of the crew at this, to them, magnificent present. It is proverbial, that sailors care more for tobacco than for any other article of luxury that could be named. These were no exceptions to the general rule. A moment later, and each was engaged in filling his pipe, first cutting a few chips from off his hunk, then rolling it about in the palm of his hand, with a motion peculiar to all users of clay pipes and "plug" tobacco; then with several pulls they lighted them and sauntered off with hands in their pockets, apparently the most happy of men.

Mr. Cooper and Mr. Bemis started off towards the crest of the hill above, where the forms of Mr. Ready and Mr. Benton could still be seen viewing the surrounding country.

Eva and Freddie were hard at work laying out Eva's garden, Freddie having secured part of a bundle of shingles for this purpose, which the men had left from covering the top of the shed on the wharf. With a small hatchet, which he had borrowed from the tool chest, he was cutting these in two pieces and pointing the edges. When he had secured a sufficient number he easily pressed one end into the ground several inches, placing each piece close to the next, until he had thus fenced in a piece of ground nearly a rod square, through the cen-

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ter of which trickled the little brook, and then with a jump he was off to find the rest of the boys who were fishing for tomcods off the end of the wharf. The tomcods were to be seen in a perfect school, several feet below the water, and the boys were hauling them in as fast as they could bait and throw in their lines. They baited with small bits of fat pork, and had already caught between forty and fifty cod and three flounders.

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CHAPTER IV.

A BIG HAUL.

IT was late in the evening when the boys stopped fishing, and Max, who had come down to the wharf, after doing the work in the kitchen, had cleaned the largest of the fish for breakfast in the morning; then all returned to the house together. It was late, but the air was still cool and fresh, and the twilight still lingered.

"How late it is, and yet how plainly we can see everything," remarked John, as they pursued their way to the house. "I believe that I could see to read, if I only had a book with me."

"Mr. Taylor says that it is a peculiarity of this climate," put in Allie. "He says that in the summer time you can sometimes see to read at eleven o'clock at night by the twilight alone, and that it is light again at three in the morning."

"I don't see why that should be," said Max.

"It must be, Max," said Freddie, "because of the convex surface of the earth, and because we are so near the North pole. The earth is not so many miles around here as it is at the center or largest part, don't you see? So, of course, the twilight must last longer over a given amount of surface."

"Oh, that's it, is it!" laughed Max; "well, I am glad to know that; I never could understand it before. Now, boys, good night."

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Max had hardly spoken the words before innumerable threads of white light lit up the northern sky and shot far upwards into the heavens towards the zenith. This increased rapidly, until the boys stood watching a trembling, gauzy veil which gradually lit up the whole sky, in that direction, which disappeared and appeared again with rapid, successive flashes, until it finally condensed into a huge band or ribbon, spanning the sky from the northeast to the northwest. For over half an hour the boys stood watching this beautiful electrical display; then they too retired to rest.

The next morning work was continued on the vessel.

"It is remarkable," said Mr. Ready to Mr. Benton, "that, in this region of the globe, we have but three kinds of weather — pleasant, foggy, and rainy — that is, at this season of the year. Now each of these usually lasts several days at a time, and as our fog lasted us three or four days, so our pleasant weather may last us an equal amount of time. I believe, sir," Mr. Ready continued, "we shall be able to entirely unload the *Sea Foam* while the pleasant weather lasts."

"I sincerely hope so," replied Mr. Benton; "it is much to be desired, at any rate."

At that moment Eva and her mother appeared from their room, and greeted the company.

"Good morning, madam," said Mr. Ready, with good-natured suavity; "I hope you rested well last night?"

"Most excellently, Mr. Ready," said Mrs. Benton, "thanks to your most successful endeavors in my behalf."

"And Eva, my dear," continued Mr. Ready, "how did your new cot suit you?"

"Oh, splendidly, Mr. Ready," said Eva, enthusiasti-

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cally; "I am ever, and ever so much obliged for the trouble you have taken for me."

"We must all do things for each other now, my dear," said the former, laughing; "but come out into the beautiful morning air, and agree with me that our climate, at its best, at this season of the year, is perfect."

"A beautiful morning," exclaimed Mrs. Benton, as she gazed, in undisguised admiration, at the clear, well-defined view before her. "This view, of itself, is enough to make one wish to remain here; I declare, it is most perfect!"

"We have views of this description all up and down the coast," remarked Mr. Ready.

"I think none of us will be sorry for a few months of this weather in such a beautiful location," remarked Mr. Benton; "it is beginning to do me good already, and I am sure that Mrs. Benton is looking much improved, also."

While they were standing at the door and viewing the scenery, the three boats were seen to glide from the harbor, and slowly approach the vessel.

"There go the men," shouted Allie. "See! they are going to the poor old *Sea Foam*."

"Another day's work will do considerable towards emptying her hold, at any rate," exclaimed Mr. Benton, rather to himself than to anybody else. "I hope we can clear everything before a storm or rough sea sets in."

"I think we can do it, sir," said Mr. Ready, with considerable emphasis. "Mr. Bemis and I will eat our breakfast, and go on board and assist, sir," and Captain Ready entered the breakfast room, and bustled about and stirred up Max the cook. Then he and Mr. Bemis sat down and began to eat.

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They were soon followed by the rest of the party, and all found that Max's oatmeal, and broiled fresh tomcod, and crisp pork chips, and fried potatoes, and fresh biscuits and butter, went off at a surprising rate.

"This is the grub that makes the butterfly," whispered Allie, as he nudged Freddie in the side.

"H-sh-sh-sh!" replied Freddie, nudging back, and eating as fast as ever he could; "that's old."

Just then Eva was eating a nice piece of buttered biscuit, and, as Freddie's remark was somewhat louder than he had intended it should be, Eva overheard it, very naturally, and thought that it applied to what she was eating.

"No, it isn't old," exclaimed that young lady, somewhat impetuously; "it isn't old a bit, and I think you are real mean to spoil my mouthful; there now," and Eva tossed the piece of biscuit back into her plate, and looked fire for a moment at Freddie.

After Allie had explained that it was meant for him, and told the joke, Eva laughed, begged Freddie's pardon, and was soon eating as if nothing had happened.

By this time Mr. Ready and Mr. Bemis had finished breakfasting and gone to the wharf to be there when the first boat should come ashore, to go on board of the vessel. The boys, too, hurried their meal, as they saw one of the boats approaching, that they too might go; thus the ladies were left quite by themselves, especially as Mr. Taylor went off for another try at the trout, where Mr. Benton, strange to say, had been induced to accompany him.

"There now, Max," said Mrs. Benton, half an hour afterwards, when the table had been cleared, though the dishes had not yet been washed; "we have the whole

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house to ourselves; even Eva is out at her flower-garden."

"Not quite alone," sounded a voice in the doorway, and Mr. Ready entered with his arms full of boards, which with a great deal of trouble he succeeded in getting up the steps into the loft above.

"There," sounded Mr. Ready's hollow voice from above, "now I guess I can fix things. I was one too many on the boat. I'll have it all to myself here."

While Mr. Ready was busy "fixing things," or, in other words, making bunks for each man to sleep in, we will return to the wreck.

As the boat containing the boys had approached the vessel, Allie whispered to Fred:

"Oh, Freddie, see! the wheel is now out of water; we'll have the old *Sea Foam* afloat yet, see if we don't."

It was indeed true.

The men had been unloading the schooner by the stern hatch-way, and the decrease of weight had indeed, during the night, caused the wreck to rise several feet further above the water line. No one else seemed to pay any attention to the fact, however, as all were too busy preparing for a renewal of yesterday's work of unloading the remainder of the cargo.

While the men were at work loading the boats from the hold, the boys, launching a small dory that had been lying near the starboard side of the bow of the vessel, amused themselves in paddling about here and there, and occupying the time first in this way and then in that. Sometimes they would fish for tomcod, and usually had pretty good luck. Sometimes they would sink their lines to the bottom and catch what the French sailors termed, at least as well as they could understand

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them from their peculiar enunciation of the language, a plugoy, or sculpin, of which there seemed to be several kinds, and some of them monsters.

"What an ugly looking fellow," remarked Freddie, as he drew up one larger than any of the rest, and nearly two feet long. "What an immense mouth and ugly head; it looks hungry enough to swallow itself."

"Like the African anaconda?" said Allie, "who could 'swallow himself, and come out again with facility?'"

"I guess so," said Freddie, as he gave the ugly rascal a whack against the side of the boat and sent him to the bottom again.

After a time Allie drew in a large flounder, and soon John drew in another.

"We'll carry these home," said Allie; "they are splendid eating."

"I'm going to catch a big codfish," laughed John, as he drew in his line, wound it up, and proceeded to extract a hugh, heavy cod line from the locker.

"Good luck to you," shouted Freddie, as the stout line with its heavy lead sinker splashed in the water, baited with a large piece cut from the back of one of the smaller fishes, from which the skin had first been peeled.

"There she goes," responded John, as fathom after fathom of line ran out, "plumb on the bottom; now draw it up an arms-length and make the line fast to the thole-pin; there now, if we don't have something pretty soon I'm no good at guessing."

"Hooray!" cried John, exultantly, after holding on to his line and waiting patiently for some fifteen minutes, "here she comes, boys, and a big one too, I guess, from

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the feeling; a ten pounder, I'll bet," and John tugged manfully at the line.

"Steady," laughed Freddie, as his brother now stood up and now sat down to pull the more easily.

"Steady it is," screeched rather than spoke John, as he landed a huge cod with slash and splatter right in the midst of the dory, singing out "heads" as he did so.

Freddie jumped to one end of the boat and Allie to the other.

"I guess it is a shark," cried the former; "it's big enough and makes enough splashing."

"Hallo, boys," called out Mr. Bemis from the schooner, "what have you got?"

"A big cod," cried Allie; "an awful big one; John caught it; come and see it."

"Well," responded Mr. Bemis, with a laugh, "I'm like a great many persons in a great many things, but I can't walk on the water like Peter, yet."

The mate, too, pricked up his ears when he heard that the boys had caught a codfish. "Where there's one, there's generally more to keep him company," he dryly remarked to Mr. Bemis.

"Try it again, boys," called out Mr. Bemis.

"We're going to," replied Freddie; "get us a couple more lines, and we'll come after them," added Allie.

While Mr. Bemis was procuring the lines, the boys rowed up to the schooner and tossed their fish on board.

"That *is* a fine one," remarked Mr. Cooper, admiring it more from an old hand's point of view, however. "I guess it will weigh twenty pounds. A big one, too, for the spring of the year. If we could catch a thousand quintals of that sort of fish we could go home pretty well loaded, Mr. Bemis."

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"Yes, and we ought to do it," replied the latter. "That's only two hundred and fifty quintals a month for the four months of the season. Three boats and a dory ought to do that, I should think."

"Well, hardly," said Mr. Cooper; "but if the fishing is good all the season, we ought to get well on toward that amount. Let me see; say the three boats average three-quarters full twice a day, which they can easily do if there are any fish about. The larger boat will hold ten, the two smaller about seven quintals each; that will be thirty-six quintals a day. No, no; we can't catch thirty nor twenty-five; if we catch twenty we shall be doing well. Yes, Mr. Bemis, if there are any fish at all here, we must toe the mark at one thousand, sure."

The boys, having got their lines, and reached as near their former fishing-ground as they could, now began to fish again, and soon had the good fortune to strike "good ground," as the mate called it; for they continued during the next hour to haul in the fish, though most of them were much smaller than the one they had first caught. At the end of that time Mr. Bemis called out again:

"Well, boys, how many quintals?"

"I guess we've got half a one," sung out Freddie, hauling in a big cod at the same time.

"Oh, yes, nearly two-thirds," added Allie, following suit with another.

"We can more than cover the bottom of the boat anyway," said John, bringing in still another fish.

"You must have some twenty or thirty fish," remarked Mr. Bemis, laughing.

"I guess we have," shouted Freddie; "it's nearer one hun—"

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"Sh-sh-sh," put in Allie; "don't tell him how many it is until we get a boat load. I believe we can fish as well as the men can, though my fingers *are* terribly cut up, and smart like everything with the salt water."

"How deep is the water, boys?" asked Mr. Cooper.

"Oh, about ten fathoms," replied Freddie.

"I thought as much," Mr. Cooper remarked. "You'll only catch small fish, then, though you may get a good many of them. I'm glad the fish are so near shore," he added, aside, to Mr. Bemis.

"Yes, indeed," replied the latter. "We seem to be pretty fortunate all 'round. Perhaps our venture will turn out better than we expected."

"I hope so," was all that Mr. Cooper remarked.

Still the boys continued their fishing, in spite of their sore and swollen hands and fingers. The sport was too novel to be easily given up, and it was even difficult to get them to come home at dinner time, so absorbed had they become in their work.

"Come to dinner, boys," cried Mr. Bemis; "you must have caught your quintal and earned your dinner by this time. We've got all the goods out down to the salt bags and wood, and we're going. Come on; hurry up."

The boys reluctantly pulled up their lines and were soon rowing towards the schooner.

"Ship ahoy," cried one of the sailors, laughing; "give us a line, and we'll tow yer."

The boys, at that moment, appeared around the angle of the rocks.

"Whew!" cried the mate, and began to whistle; while Mr. Bemis and all the sailors crowded around the boys.

"This looks like old times," cried Peters, rubbing his hands together. "If them youngsters can do that, we

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can double it, if not more," he continued. "When I was on the banks — "

"Never mind the banks now," said Mr. Cooper; "let's take these loads ashore and go to dinner."

When they reached the wharf, Mr. Ready was there to meet them.

"Heighty-teighty; hoighty-toighty!" remarked that gentleman, when he saw the dory over half full of fish. "You've earned your dinners for a week, boys," shouted he, swinging his cap over his head, and running up to the house in search of Mr. Benton, to impart the good news of "plenty fish in the bay."

Directly after dinner the boys, assisted by Mr. Ready, constructed a rough wooden bench on the end of the wharf, to serve as a cleaning board for their fish, and then rowed to the schooner for a bag of salt.

By the time they had returned, Mr. Ready had cleared a space in the shed next the door at the wharf end, to lay the fish after they were cleaned, and also boarded up the end of the wharf, next the water, and just back of the cleaning board, for a trough to throw the fish into. At high tide the boats were within a few feet of the top of the wharf, but at low tide they were fully eight feet below. The men would be obliged to toss the fish from the boat to the wharf by means of pitchforks. The bench or cleaning board had a small square hole in it, made near the middle, beneath which was placed a barrel to receive the livers of the cod, which were pushed into it. At one side, nearly below where the "header," as he was called, stood, a hole about a foot square was cut in the wharf, through which the rejected portions fell into the water. At the edge of the table where this man stood, a piece of flat iron had been nailed down, over

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which to press the fish, in severing the head from the body. The mate had procured two knives from the vessel, which he gave to the boys when they had gone after the salt, and now, toward the middle of the afternoon, they were all equipped for work.

"Come now, boys," shouted Mr. Ready, throwing his coat into one corner, "do as I do."

Mr. Ready then took a meal sack, and, after having cut it into four pieces, each tied a piece about his waist. "Now we will learn the codfish business."

By Mr. Ready's orders, Freddie then got into the boat and began, with a narrow-tined, long-handled pitchfork, tossing the fish into the trough on the wharf. As the fish came up, Allie, directed by Mr. Ready, would grasp each by the head, putting the thumb and middle finger in each eye, and, laying the fish on the corner of the table, press the head downward so that the thick muscle of the throat bulged out and upwards, and then, with a stroke of his knife, which was short, tapering to a point, and sharp on both edges, sever this muscle; and with another single or double stroke slit down the belly to the vent, and pass the fish over to the next man. As the fishes were all small, John took this place, and, directed as the other boys had been, by Mr. Ready, he first separated the liver from the fish, giving it a push toward the hole in the table, from whence it fell into the barrel, and then gathering the insides together he held them with the fish's head over the iron on the side of the table, and shoved with both hands until he had separated the head from the body; then he passed the latter on to Mr. Ready, while the head and entrails fell through the hole in the wharf to the water below. Mr. Ready then cut out the backbone with another sharp knife, and threw

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the fish into a box provided with two long pieces of narrow board, fastened securely to each side, which served for a hand-barrow.

"Here we go, boys! keep track of the number. How many are there now?"

"One," laughed Allie, as Mr. Ready threw the first fish into the box.

"Oh, yes," laughed Mr. Ready, "one. There now, Mr. Header, you can begin to keep count."

"Who are you calling 'header'?" laughed John, tugging away manfully at the head of the big fish that he had caught in the morning.

"Well, anybody can keep count; just give a little mark on the board and cross every four for the fifth; then leave a little space between every five. There you are!"

Thus the work progressed, until the last fish, the one hundred and eighty-sixth, was dressed.

The boxes, as they had become full, were taken into the shed and emptied. Now that all the fish were finished, Mr. Ready began to pile them. He laid them in two double rows along the side of the shed for a distance of about ten feet. Each row was laid, the head of one fish to the tail of the other, with the fleshy parts uppermost. When the first layer was completed, plenty of salt was sprinkled over it and another pile begun. The fishes made a little over two layers. These, well salted, were covered over with clean boards, and the party hurried to the water's edge to wash the dirt and slime from their hands.

"Now we must rig a pump on the wharf so that we can wash it down, and we shall be all right for another mess. When we get into the business, as we shall

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by and by, we must rig one of our small nets for bait, and then go bait hunting every night for the next day's fishing. But we are getting ahead too fast, boys; too fast altogether for 'shipwrecked mariners;'" said Mr. Ready.

All the while the boys had been at work the crew were landing the rest of the stores, and the goods from the forward part of the schooner. The cabin was still full of water, and everything there was soaked; but, even as Allie had prophesied, the stern of the vessel had at last risen above the water, and still continued to rise as the weight was removed from the hold. One hundred bags of salt, each of them a little larger than an ordinary meal bag, had been carried on shore; two real "American barges" and one "Novy" or Nova Scotia barge, launched in good shape, and rigged, with several grappling irons, and a host of other material; to say nothing of several boxes of dry goods and small groceries, successfully stored on the wharf. A big box of books, which Mr. Benton had bought at Mr. Ready's suggestion, was loaded into one of the boats; and still another, of lines, hooks, sinkers, twine for netting, and even two or three small nets, carefully secured. In fact, everything had been cleared from the hold of the vessel, save the materials for a small, neat frame house, which had been made on shore, by an experienced carpenter, and carefully shipped under his directions.

The next day was to be devoted to removing these, also; and then trying to remove the contents of the cabin.

The mate, now that the stern of the vessel was above water, rigged a pump and began to pump out the water from the cabin. It was slow work, but great was the

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joy of the boys when, a little later they visited the vessel and noted the changes.

"There," exclaimed Allie, eyeing the schooner with the air of a seaman; "I think I can eat *my* supper to-night with a very good grace indeed. I've earned it."

"So have I," shouted each in turn.

Half an hour later six very tired men and three boys were climbing up the path from the wharf to the house.

Eva was jumping and clapping her hands, and calling to Freddie to come and see her flower-garden; Mr. and Mrs. Benton stood in the doorway to greet the party, and the former spoke a few words of commendation to the men.

In the house, too, considerable had been done. The walls had been neatly papered with some rolls of cheap, clean wall paper; the floor had been half carpeted with a piece of rough straw matting; and plain wooden chairs, enough to seat all hands, if necessary, together with a cheap rocker, all of which had been bought at the suggestion of Mr. Ready, who assured Mr. Benton that every one of them would "trade," were arranged about the room for the use of anybody who might need them.

Mr. Ready had completed the bunks "up aloft" before dinner, and Max had also done a job of carpentering for himself, by placing shelves in the corner of the room, upon which to put the dishes.

"A very orderly household," laughed Mr. Ready, rubbing his hands. "I am afraid that we are *pretty* nearly ready for a storm."

"Storm!" echoed Allie; "see how light it is in the sky."

"Yes," continued Mr. Ready, "and that light means fog, if it means anything."

"Well," said Mr. Benton, "let it come, if it must."

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CHAPTER V.

HOW THE BOYS MADE A FOGGY DAY A VERY PLEASANT ONE.

THE next morning, as Mr. Ready had predicted, everything was enveloped in a thick fog. It was so dense as entirely to shut out the sight of the shed on the wharf from those at the house. The air seemed close and sticky, and everything damp to the touch. Work could not be thought of under such circumstances, so the men lay idle all day, and amused themselves as best they could. Some followed the stream to the pond, and tried their luck at catching trout. The mate and Mr. Ready spent most of their time in the shed sorting and arranging the *Sea Foam's* cargo. While the latter were thus engaged, the boys, with their hooks and lines, took possession of the wharf, and began to try their luck with tomcods, flounders, and sculpins, which were lying close by in scores.

"I declare!" exclaimed one of the boys, "this *is* dull work! I wish we could get up a sensation."

"Set the house on fire!" laughed Freddie.

"I say, boys!" said John. "It seems too bad to let our things lie in that wet old cabin all this time. I move we start off and rescue them, or at least attempt to."

"Yes; but we can't get out there in all this fog" replied Allie.

"That's true; but it does seem wicked to let my gun

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lie there, six feet under water, for so many days, and not attempt a rescue," said John; "what *can* we do, boys?"

"Form a society for the prevention of cruelty to cod-fish!" remarked Freddie, facetiously, as Allie drew in his line with two small tomcods, one hooked directly in the belly; and the other having swallowed the bait and hook both, necessitated cutting him open to extract the hook.

Allie caught up the fish that had been hooked by the belly, and threw it at Freddie with such good aim that it hit him squarely on the head and knocked his hat off into the water. Fortunately there was a boat hook lying near, and the hat, which was a light felt one, was soon recovered, dripping wet, and replaced on the head of the owner again, though somewhat out of shape.

"I'll pay you for that, one of these days, Allie Benton," said Fred, with a good-natured jerk of the head; "you see if I don't."

Mr. Ready now came out of the shed and proposed to the boys to go lobstering, a proposition which was heartily accepted.

Under the direction of Mr. Ready each procured a short, round, rather thick alder cane, and fastened a large cod hook to the end of it, so that the hook reached about an inch beyond the end of the stick. Mr. Ready then whittled, from a piece of shingle, a number of small pegs, some thirty or more, and proceeding to fill his pockets with them and a long piece of stout twine, he called out:

"All ready, boys, come on!"

The boys had taken off their shoes and stockings and rolled up their trowsers, and were soon following Mr. Ready along the beach of sand toward the rocks at the head of the bay.

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The tide was quite low, and the party could easily walk around the base of several high cliffs, which otherwise they would have been obliged to climb. The water was very cold, and the rocks hurt their feet, but they persevered and tramped on.

At one time they frightened a flock of large birds, which were wading some distance out in the water, just around a point of land ahead of them. They flew off with a loud whistle "qu, qu, gu!"

"What are those birds," cried Freddie.

"They are what we call 'Quebec Curlew,'" replied Mr. Ready.

"Don't we call them Golden Plovers?" asked Allie. "I think they are the same."

"Very likely!" laughed Mr. Ready; "I never knew why they called them 'Quebec Curlew.'"

"I'd call them almost anything if I had my gun," said John.

The birds could occasionally be heard, and were in sight across the bay.

"I tell you," said Allie. "One of us ought to go home and get the mate's old smooth bore musket, and perhaps we might get a shot at them."

"Never mind the gun, now, boys, we are going after something better than Quebec Curlew," said Mr. Ready.

After about half an hour's hard tramping they reached a cove near the head of the bay, Here a small stream entered the salt water, trickling along a bed of rocks, covered with mosses and ferns of most delicate varieties and forms.

A little way out, in the water, quantities of huge stones and small pebbles, overgrown with kelp, were thickly scattered. Mr. Ready made a run for a big rock,

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near by, and began vigorously plunging his gaff beneath the water and under the rock.

"Bother on you, come here!" exclaimed Mr. Ready, in a half vexed tone of voice.

The boys immediately ran up to where he was and asked what he wanted.

"I'm not talking to you!" exclaimed Mr. Ready, "I'm talking" — here he began another vigorous punching and poking with his gaff beneath the rock — "to this lobster."

From leaning down so far, and poking so much, Mr. Ready began to grow red in the face, but presently he drew in triumph an immense lobster from beneath the rock.

"Here," he shouted, "punch all around these rocks and in the water, and you'll soon find plenty."

The boys followed Mr. Ready's advice. Every nook and corner was searched and probed with the four gaffs, and several good-sized lobsters were the result. Each of them had their claws plugged — that is, the little pegs that Mr. Ready had taken with him were inserted at the soft spot at the base of each claw, in front, so that those formidable weapons were rendered useless.

The lobsters were not very plentiful; but soon there was a pile of between thirty and forty, all plugged and strung, and divided into four parts, and at length, when Mr. Ready gave the word for home, each shouldered his share and off they started.

Eva was in a perfect ecstasy of delight at the sight of the spoils taken. Max, too, was glad, and soon the big boiler was filled with fresh salt water and thirty-seven large fellows were packed into it to be boiled.

"Twenty minutes after the water boils!" sang out Mr. Ready.

"Oh! you can't tell me anything about lobsters!"

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shouted Max, in reply, as Mr. Ready hurried toward the shed.

"I think it's too bad, to put them in that hot water alive!" said Eva to Max.

"You go away, and come back in five minutes!" laughed Max, "and if they are alive then we will take them out."

"Then it'll be too late, they'll all be dead!"

"I know it!" said Max, laughing again, "that's the way I want them to be!"

Just then Eva ran to the door to see Fred, who was calling her, and Max went on with his work of boiling the lobsters.

"Well, Fred! What do you want?" said Eva, coming to the door, near which he stood, barefooted, with his trowsers rolled up, wet and muddy, the perfect picture of a tired, dirty, hungry boy.

"I want a piece of pie and some doughnuts and cheese, or something good to eat," said Freddie.

"Look here!" exclaimed Eva, catching hold of Fred's button hole and whispering in his ear; "you go and lie right down, and take a nap; you're all tired out."

"I've a great mind to," said Fred.

"Do!" cried Eva. "You go, and I'll bring you something."

Freddie pulled down his trowsers' legs, brushed the mud off, and going into the house threw himself down upon the couch: a few minutes later, Eva brought him a couple of doughnuts and a large piece of cheese, and even while he was eating them he fell fast asleep. Half an hour later he woke up greatly refreshed, laughed at the idea of his falling asleep in the daytime, finished eating his doughnuts and cheese, and ran out to see what the other boys were doing.

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He found the boys in the shed, with Mr. Ready and the mate, engaged very earnestly in netting a trout net. That is, the boys were netting by turns upon it; while the mate himself was completing a small hand net for catching bait with. It was a common, small meshed dip net, and Mr. Cooper was fastening it upon a long wooden handle, jointed in the middle, that had been brought with them for this purpose from Boston.

The trout net was progressing slowly. It was to be fifteen fathoms, or ninety feet long, and a fathom wide, the meshes being three inches wide. John was working away at it steadily, and had already completed nearly a fathom.

"We shall put you all at work, by and by," said Mr. Cooper, as Fred walked into the shed. "You've always wanted to earn your own living; now you'll have to do it. Castaway boys have to work as well as the men, don't they, Captain?"

"Yes, indeed!" cried Mr. Ready. "We have all got to work now!"

The novelty of the situation was such as to render the boys quite unmindful of the fact that they were really in a position where work was not needed, or expected from them. They did not realize but what they were on a desert island, a thousand miles away from the main land, and supposed their services were required as much now as if the latter event had really happened. Mr. Ready was business man enough to see this, and thought it best to impose upon their good nature. Mr. Benton saw the same aspect of the case and, for the good of the boys, allowed the matter to pass, knowing well that it would "do 'em good to rough it a little," as he had said.

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"We will do our share, then," said Fred, answering the mate's assertion, "you need have no fear for us!"

"I will set you to work soon enough, my boy, never fear!" replied Mr. Cooper.

"Give me another net to make, then," said Fred, always jealous of his ability to do, when placed in rivalry with others, and especially with his brothers. "Give me another net to make, and I will finish it before they do theirs, at any rate!"

The mate chuckled to himself as he saw at once means to an end placed before him, so he replied:

"All right, we need all we can get. I will set you each to work, at once, and the one that finishes first shall go fishing with me in my boat; eh! Mr. Ready?"

"Very good idea," replied Mr. Ready, nodding his head and twinkling his eyes.

The boys caught the spirit at once, and soon all three of them were at work, each as if his life depended upon it; though John was considerably ahead, it remained to be seen how long he would keep ahead, as he was the slowest worker among them.

"The system of reward and punishment works well," laughed Mr. Ready, as he finished stacking all the bags of salt in one corner of the shed together.

"Only keep it working," was Mr. Cooper's reply.

The manner in which the boys proceeded with their work was somewhat as follows:

They first drove a large nail into the wall, at a proper distance from the floor, some three feet or more, then while one of the boys held a wooden stick about a foot from the nail the other fastened an end of a ball of stout trout twine to the nail, and passed the twine successively around the nail and the stick until about thirty

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loops were made. The working instruments were a needle and a card. The needle was flat, eight inches long, conical at the top, and the bottom concave for about an inch; the inside of the upper third was also hollow, saving a small needle shaped piece, running up in the center to within half an inch of the top. The card was a simple flat piece of wood, as wide as the meshes were to be long, and long enough to overlap the last mesh by about half an inch. Each needle, and there were several for each person, was wound full of twine, the turns running around the inner point of the needle, and over the concave end. In netting, the needle was thrust through the loop above, the twine brought over the card, to which it was tightly drawn, and a knot made by drawing the needle between the threads and through a loop in its own thread, and the whole drawn tightly — "but," as the mate had said, after showing the boys how it was done, "now do it yourselves, boys! Do it yourselves! 'tis the best way to find out. And netting is very pretty, easy work when you once know how."

So the boys did it themselves, and it was really marvelous how fast the trout net grew.

"I say, boys!" said Allie. "Let's make us each a hammock, when we have finished our nets; anything will be more comfortable than those close bunks way up in the loft."

"Will there be time enough?" asked Freddie.

"We can easily find out," replied Allie. "I say, Mr. Cooper, can't we have time enough to make us each a hammock after we have finished our nets."

"Oh, yes! plenty of time, and to spare; trade's dull just at present," he added, rather dryly.

The boys stared, and Mr. Ready laughed, at which the

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boys stared all the more, and wondered what trade he referred to. Then they hoorayed for Mr. Cooper, at least John and Allie did, while Fred worked all the faster.

"That boy's cute!" remarked Mr. Cooper to Mr. Ready; "see how he takes advantage of every little thing in his favor? He'll have his net done first, I will wager ten quintals of codfish."

"They are all as good boys as ever lived," said Mr. Ready, "and this castaway business will be the making of them; it will teach them to think and act for themselves."

Mr. Cooper turned, but muttered something to himself about Fred's being the "boy for a' that."

The fog still hung on. There were no signs of rain or a change of wind, and so the shadows deepened and evening approached. Soon the horn summoned all to supper, and Eva appeared at the door to greet the boys, and especially Fred, who was undisguisedly her favorite.

"Hasn't this been a disagreeable day?" was the remark of that young lady, as they all appeared at the door of the house. "It's been as dull and wearisome as if we were really on a barren island."

"Yes, indeed!" remarked Mr. Benton, just coming in, "and as profitless."

"Always looking for profit, Mr. Benton! do come and sit down for five minutes," remarked Mrs. Benton, coming out of her room toward the group approaching the door.

"Certainly, madam!" graciously remarked Mr. Benton, bowing and waving his hand in a South African or Indian *salaam*. "Certainly, madam! And for *twenty-five*

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minutes, as soon as Max has finished replenishing the table."

For supper Max had stewed a huge dish of dried apples and baked an extra amount of new bread.

"If we only had some milk," said Allie.

"I can get you some milk," said Fred, who seemed especially inclined to be facetious just then.

"How! where from?" spoke up Allie.

"From the milk-weed, how's that?" laughed Fred, much to Allie's disgust.

"I say, Fred," said Allie, "have you been eating any pickles, lately?"

"No!" said Fred, so earnestly that everybody smiled. "Are there any here?"

"Not here, that I know of," replied Allie, "but didn't you eat four big ones the day the molasses barrel fell on the pickle and flour barrel?"

"Yes! but what of it?" returned Freddie, still so earnestly that everybody laughed again.

"That accounts for your sharp points, to-night, I guess."

"I owe you two, now, Allie Benton! and you'd better look out or I'll pay them both off together."

At length Max announced that supper was ready, and all sat down to enjoy it. A large dish of delicious fish and lobster was at each end of the table, and great was the astonishment and delight of those not already in the secret, at such a surprise.

"Well, wife!" said Mr. Benton. "This is vastly superior to the sea-shore at home, I assure you. I wonder why more people never think of coming out to some unfrequented coast, like this, and spending the summer?"

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"I suppose they have not tried it, as we are now doing, and really are not aware of how delightful it is," replied Mrs. Benton.

"I shall strongly recommend this sort of summer pleasuring, when I return," said Mr. Benton, taking an uncommonly large mouthful of lobster.

Fred nudged Allie, who was also helping himself bountifully, and at the same time signified his assent also in a quite audible whisper.

In the midst of their repast the door opened and Mr. Taylor stepped in with a big string of trout which he had caught in the pond.

"Here, Max! here's something for breakfast to-morrow. Now for some supper, as quick as ever I can have it."

Mr. Taylor went off to wash, and left the trout with Max, who hung them upon a nail, just inside of the door, and then returned.

Mr. Taylor also returned, in a moment, and was soon attacking the lobster.

"How fresh and most excellent this tastes, Max," said Mr. Taylor. "Who got them?"

"Mr. Ready and the boys, sir!" replied Max.

"I think we have all improved our time since our terrible shipwreck," laughed Mr. Taylor. "*I* really find our life for the past few days quite endurable. I don't much object to the prospect for the summer, I assure you!"

After supper Freddie got up and left the table with the rest of the boys, and all hastened down to the wharf, where they amused themselves fishing, until quite late, several large tomcods and a few fair-sized flounders rewarding their efforts.

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"There!" exclaimed Freddie, "I'm tired enough for to-day; I'm going to 'bunk in,' as Mr. Ready calls it, and I think all hands had better do the same."

As all seemed to agree in this opinion, they wound up their fish lines, took the bait off the hooks and threw it into the water, and stored them all away in the shed. Then they gathered up their fish, put them in a bucket of water, washed their hands and started towards the house.

"Here, Max! here is something for you," said Allie, as he handed Max the pail.

"My eye!" exclaimed Max. "What shall we do with so many things? Lobster, trout, tomcods, and flounder for breakfast; which shall we have? or shall we have them all?"

"All," cried John.

"Yes," said Max. "All it is! We'll have them all, and see which tastes the best."

As this suited the boys, exactly, they gave a hooray for Max, and were soon off to bed. A very little later, and the rest of the household had followed them.

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CHAPTER VI.

HOW THE FOGGY WEATHER CLEARED AT LAST BOTH INDOORS AND OUT.

THUS the days passed in quiet succession. Sometimes it was pleasant and sometimes it was stormy weather; sometimes the fog set in for a week at a time, rendering it impossible for the men to work, filling the hearts of the little party with gloom, and giving rise to gloomy thoughts and forebodings. The sunny weather would then come again to gladden all and restore nature and heavy spirits to freedom and joyfulness.

"When the weather *is* fine it is very, very fine;
And when it is bad it is horrid," —

so Eva sang once on a most beautiful morning.

Meanwhile the men had pumped the vessel dry, and had been able to rescue, though in a more or less damaged condition, all the articles in the cabin, and bring them on shore.

The clothes were soaked out in fresh water, and hung out on a line to dry, while a large flat stone, just in front of the house, was covered with damaged though reclaimable articles, that air, sun, and time might help to put them in a fit state to be used once more.

Eva, who was fond of poetry, came out to the door with her arms full of clothes to hang on the line, singing:

"It chanced to be our washing-day,
And all the clothes were drying."

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Then the boys were busy cleaning up their guns, and fishing poles and lines, and all their "various appendages," as Mr. Taylor termed them; while even Mr. Taylor himself deigned to turn to and help to the best of his ability, — though he confined his operations chiefly to his own trunk, and to the especial care of drying a large tin box of seidlitz powders and a huge sponge; he paid Max a dollar to wash his clothes for him. It was fully a week before everything was restored to a condition of usefulness, and then only about two-thirds of the articles were really of any value. The boys' powder suffered considerably, yet as it had been in two tight five-pound tin cans, but little water had penetrated to the powder, and it was soon dried by exposure on papers to the sun for a short time. The shot was all right, the caps all good, but the wads were very nearly ruined.

At length, after a good deal of care and painstaking, order was brought out of confusion, and Captain Ready laughed, as he exclaimed:

"There, there, only a little excitement and something to occupy the time. Order out of chaos; order out of chaos at last."

"Certainly," added Mr. Benton; "order out of chaos at last. Mrs. Benton, it is *very* annoying that the little tobacco that I ever *do* use should have been ruined; yes, positively ruined by the water."

At last one night the wind began to blow, and the waves to dash upon the beach. At first only as a gentle breeze, and a continual lap, lap, upon the stones and rocks; then it increased in force and violence, and soon the wind was howling in a perfect hurricane, while louder and angrier grew the dashing of the water upon the rocks. Then the rain descended in sudden

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gusts and flurries, almost with the force of small hail-stones.

The men had gone to their bunks when the storm began to arise, early in the evening, but as it progressed, most of them remained awake listening to the fury of the tempest.

"The last of the *Sea Foam*, I guess," said Mr. Ready to Mr. Cooper, who had his bunk just below that of Mr. Ready, on the same side.

"She won't stand much of this weather," replied Mr. Cooper; "if she hasn't gone already, she soon will go."

"It's too bad to lose so good a vessel," Mr. Ready added; "I was really beginning to get quite attached to her."

"You'd be more so if you'd been in her and over her, and sailed nigh on to ten years in her, in storm and calm, summer and winter, to Newfoundland and the West Indies."

"No doubt I should; but have you been to all these places?"

"Oh, yes; I've been all over the West Indies, across the water twice, around the Horn once, and to Iceland once."

"Not all in the *Sea Foam?*"

"Oh, no; but I've been all over the West Indies in the *Sea Foam*, and around Newfoundland in her once."

"You must tell us some of your adventures, some time," said Mr. Ready. "I am sure we should all like to hear them."

"Humph," growled Mr. Cooper, "people are always more ready to listen than to talk; go to sleep, I'm going to talk no more," and the mate rolled over in his bunk, and, in spite of the storm, was soon snoring vigorously.

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The wind howled and roared, and the rain came down in torrents; the storm continued all night, and when the sleepers awoke it was still raging furiously. Dark clouds everywhere, with rain and wind, showed that the tempest was far from abating. The huge waves beat against the rocks and shore with relentless fury. There were several large rocks standing near the turn of the bay and a little out in the water; over and around these the waves dashed in grand sublimity; sometimes they would cluster about them, eddying in and around and between them, washing their bases and sides; sometimes they would rush with a swish over the tops of the lowest, and then retreat to let the water drip back again; and sometimes a huge wave or line of waves would come with tremendous force, and dashing against them throw a column of frothy, white spray high over their tops and far up into the air, to fall back in spatters on both rock and water. The rocks were clearly in sight of the windows, and Eva sat and watched the water, as in mad fury or in a moment of comparative calm, it played over these rocky sentinels.

"I declare," exclaimed Eva, after a pause of some moments, during which she intently watched the water, "how grandly it dashes over those rocks; what a perfect billow of spray it throws into the air."

"Yes," said Mr. Taylor, from a window on the other side of the room. "I think it is the most graceful and beautiful sight that I have ever seen, and it is as grand as it is beautiful."

"But, Mr. Taylor," exclaimed Eva, "where is the *Sea Foam?* I don't see her anywhere."

"That's so, Eva," replied Mr. Taylor, in some surprise and not a little consternation. "I wonder I never thought of her before. She is indeed gone. I see no trace of her

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anywhere. There are the rocks where she was, but either the vessel itself has sunk or broken up — in which case we shall find the pieces strewing the beach; or she has been lifted off the rocks by the waves and drifted to sea. In either case I fear *we* shall never see her again."

"Oh, papa," cried Eva, as Mr. Benton entered the room; "I don't see the *Sea Foam* anywhere, and Mr. Taylor thinks that she has either drowned, or smashed to pieces, or floated off to sea."

Mr. Benton went immediately to the window and took a long look in the direction of the place where so lately the *Sea Foam* remained wedged within its rocky clutches.

"I am not surprised, sir," to Mr. Taylor, "and we are now left to our own resources. I have been expecting this, sir. I have been expecting this for some time, and now that it has come, I am not surprised, and we are prepared for it. I repeat it, sir — we are prepared for it."

While they were all looking out of the window, the form of a man was seen coming around the corner and climbing the hill towards the house. He wore a long, exceedingly ample pair of light oil-cloth trowsers, a still more ample jacket, buttoned in front, and a regular seaman's "sou'wester"; as he approached, the features of Mr. Cooper were plainly visible. Mr. Benton hurried to the door to meet him and let him in. Mr. Cooper went up into the loft, and taking off his dripping garments, hung them up and soon returned.

"Well," exclaimed Mr. Benton, rather anxiously, perhaps, "what news?"

"Nothing, sir," replied Mr. Cooper, "by sign or sight. I cannot imagine *how* she could have got off those rocks; but she must have done so, and drifted out into the Gulf. Had she broken to pieces, there would have been some

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remnant of her here, as the distance is so small between us, though both tide and wind bear directly out into the Gulf."

"Might she not have been driven off the rocks and then sunk?" remarked Mr. Benton.

"Possibly, sir; though I think not, from the fact that the water would hardly be deep enough to cover her completely, and the glass reveals not a single spar above its surface."

"One thing is plain, then, — we must get off in our boats, or build another vessel, or wait for somebody to come and take us off. I think we will do the latter; we have provisions for several years, in case of necessity. We will begin fishing, then, as soon as the weather will permit."

Having thus oracularly delivered himself, Mr. Benton turned and re-entered his room, and was probably soon communicating to Mrs. Benton the news of the loss of their vessel.

Eva was now heard calling to the boys at the top of her voice, to "hurry up and come down and find the *Sea Foam!*"

This brought the boys to their senses at once, and they were soon up and dressed, and eagerly learning the news that the vessel was gone — where, no one knew.

"I don't care if she has," exclaimed Freddie. "It's all the more fun to have a little uncertainty in the midst of all our certainty."

"We've a house, comfortable quarters, plenty of provisions, plenty of time, plenty to do," remarked John, philosophically; "and if we had our vessel and everything secured for getting back again we would not enjoy it half so much as we do now. I'm glad of it. Let her go.

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I'll warrant the captain will get full insurance just the same even for the provisions we eat."

"You are a hopeful business man," quietly remarked Mr. Taylor, not sarcastically this time.

"I hate *business*," added John, in a peevish manner.

"Breakfast is ready! all hands," shouted Max, as he hurried dishes of lobster and fried trout and cod and flounder, all crisp with pork fat and scraps, and Indian meal, into platters, and upon the table. "Come and get your breakfast while it is hot." As he said this he brought out a big plateful of baked potatoes, and another of biscuits, while the coffee steamed invitingly. "I suppose you won't want any crackers or hardtack with all that you have here," said Max, as he added a large plate of that article, "but you needn't eat it if you don't want to."

All hands did full justice to the bountiful repast. The trout were fine, the cod and flounder excellent, while the boys even seemed to prefer the latter to the trout. Freddie paid little attention to the lobster, but Eva seemed to prefer it to all the rest, and made her breakfast almost wholly of it with hardtack and coffee. She said that she was "going to turn sailor, and eat sailors' food," now that she was really a "castaway." Of course everybody smiled at this remark, at which Eva pretended to be greatly offended.

After all the family had finished and arisen, the men came in and sat down to their meal. Then they arose, and Max helped himself; after that, all the things were cleaned up and the dishes washed and replaced in the pantry, and the table was free for anybody to sit around it and write or read as they chose.

Eva immediately brought out a pair of shears, a pile of old paper, and her scrap book, and began to cut pieces

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which she wished to preserve for its pages. Max had made her a small pot of paste, and there she sat, contented and happy, poring over the papers, and cutting and pasting to her heart's content all the morning. Freddie occupied his time with an old paper novel entitled "The Lost Cat," — describing the adventures of a wonderful specimen of the feline race in trying to discover the whereabouts of her owners, who had moved to another part of the village in the town wherein they lived, while the cat had been absent on a mousing expedition into a neighbor's barn. It was a wonderful series of adventures, so Freddie pronounced it, and the others fully agreed with him that it must be, from the interest he displayed in it, though they had not read it. Allie busied himself in loading shells for his gun, while John was deeply buried in a geometry, with Mr. Taylor endeavoring to prove to him *why* he could not square the circle.

Still the storm continued. Its fury had somewhat abated, but the wind whistled around the corners of the house, and over the top of the chimney and roof, and the rain poured down in torrents.

"I am pleased as well as surprised that this house is so waterproof," exclaimed Mr. Benton. "I feared we were to be drowned out by our first hard rain-storm."

"I guess that the owners had seen such weather as this before, and knew it was coming again when they built it," said Allie.

"That is very apparent," replied Mr. Benton, answering back, as he very seldom did. "I think we are safe for one season at least."

"I say, boys; let's go down and work at our trout nets," cried Freddie, finishing the cat story, and giving the book a fling at Allie's head.

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"Look out there, now," exclaimed Allie; "you've tipped over three of my shells, and spilt the powder all over the floor. How shall I ever pick it up again?"

"Get a broom and sweep it out of the door, and you shall have enough of mine to make up for it," said Freddie, chivalrously.

"I have a great mind to," replied Allie in a vexed tone of voice. "I'll throw your old cat book into the fire if I get hold of it;" and the two boys grappled for the book, while down went the board on which Allie had been loading his shells, tipping the powder all over the carpet, followed by caps, wads, shot, and even the shells themselves, which went in every direction. Eva, in despair, got up and stood upon the table, but as even the table was threatened, she very judiciously removed to the door. After a final struggle, during which time John had captured the cause of contention and quietly and unnoticed stuffed it beneath the cushion of the rocking-chair, the boys, very good-naturedly, decided to stop their quarreling and help each other pick up. This was more of a job than had been anticipated; the wads were all over the carpet, the shot and caps in every joint, corner, and seam of the floor and carpet, and had to be picked out singly. As for the powder, the broom picked most of that up, and a good part of the shot and caps, — the best being picked out from the dustpan; the remainder was thrown out of the door. After a long and unsuccessful search for the book, the three boys started, during a lull in the storm, for the shed, leaving Eva, much to her delight, in peaceful possession.

The boys took up their work with great enthusiasm and energy; they found the process of netting very easy and pleasant. It really progressed so fast as to surprise

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them. Sometimes the stint would be as to which would complete a given distance on his row first; then, how long it would take to complete a given number of rows or even a single row; and the trout nets grew, slowly, foot by foot, fathom by fathom.

In the midst of their work Mr. Cooper came in; he complimented the boys on their progress, but especially cautioned them to draw the knots tight, or their nets would soon need mending. He also showed them how to make the knot in a single stitch, which they now made in two stitches, but advised them not to try it on the nets which they were making, as, he said, it was a bad plan to mix stitches in the same piece of work.

While John and Allie were learning the new method, Freddie kept rapidly on with his net and had soon gained two full rows on John, who was still somewhat ahead.

"I mean to get my net done first, anyhow," he muttered to himself; "then I can fish with the mate in his boat."

Meanwhile the storm had somewhat abated, so Mr. Taylor, whose chief ambition seemed to be to catch trout, had rigged for the occasion, with rubber coat and hat, and tall boots, and, taking his hooks, lines, and pole, started for the pond regardless of what the weather might be.

"I shall surprise you all with a fine salmon, some day," Mr. Taylor had once said, and now Allie called out to him, as he was disappearing over the knoll:

"Be sure to bring us back that salmon you promised, Mr. Taylor."

"You doubtless think that it will be as difficult for me to get that salmon as for you to get your algebra

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lesson," replied Mr. Taylor, good-humoredly, as he disappeared toward the pond.

"You don't get ahead of Mr. Taylor much," laughed John; "but let's shut this back door."

"No," said Freddie, who was working in one corner quite away from the light; "I can't see if you do."

About eleven o'clock the rain stopped, the wind died down, and the blue sky was beginning to appear. In a copse of low spruce and blueberry bushes near by a few sparrows were dashing merrily to and fro, shaking the raindrops from the leaves, and filling the air with their cheerful songs. The white-crowned and the white-throated sparrows, with their well-known notes, each the reverse of the other, were chattering as if perfectly delighted at the prospect of a fine day; and once a titlark, fluttering about some distance up in the air, like a wounded bird about to fall, uttered a few sweet notes which, like the others, seemed to breathe of gladness and joy that the blue sky had at last appeared. Over the bay numberless large white gulls circled about, far out of gun-shot, uttering their hoarse, chuckling laughter, or they dived for small fish, or pieces of food floating upon the surface of the water beneath them. Sometimes a flock of ducks would fly by, far out to sea; then an occasional flock of plover or beach-birds would come and light now on this and now on that side of the bay, upon the sand, in plain sight from the shed where the boys were at work. Once a large black raven came by, and just as he flew over the house he doubled up his long, black wings, took a sudden curving dip in the air, and uttered a deep, guttural croak, that caused Freddie, who heard it, to laugh immoderately.

"I declare, how gloriously it is clearing off; isn't it,

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boys?" exclaimed Freddie. "Let's go out. Let's go up to the top of the hill and see the view. I'll go and get Eva, too; she hasn't seen the sight from up there yet."

The boys readily agreed, and Freddie ran off to the house to tell his sister to prepare to go with them to the hill-top to see the view. Eva was delighted, and soon had her hat and shawl and rubbers on, ready for the ascent, and came out of the door, singing:

"'The dew is on the grass, Mary,
The flowers are on the lea —
The birds, they voice their sweetest songs;
Then come, oh, love, with me!'

There, boys; I'm ready. Lead on and I'll follow;" and the merry party started off through the wet grass for the hill.

"I declare, what mean walking for so lovely a day," exclaimed Eva. "I should think that the path would be dry such a fine day, if only because we want to use it. I think that it ought to be accommodating enough for that."

"It wants to show us that all pleasures have their alloy," laughed John, as, in dodging the dripping, overhanging branch of a small spruce he hit it squarely and brought down a shower of water upon his head, some of which ran down his neck and back.

As John finished shaking himself, he suddenly lost his balance and would have fallen had he not stepped quickly to one side, just off of the path, to the mossy ground beyond. As he did this, a little bird started up from beneath a low bush growing by the side of a huge stone. Allie was the first to see the bird fly, and immediately

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rushed to the place. A little pushing aside of the branches caused a deep hollow to be seen, at the bottom of which, neatly made and cosily nestled, lay a small nest with four grayish-white eggs, marked all over with brownish spots and blotches.

"Oh, Eva; come and see what I have found," cried Allie. "Never mind the wet."

Eva didn't mind it at all, but came tumbling through the bushes to where Allie was.

"Oh, isn't it beautiful!" cried Eva, excitedly; "let's take it home. No," she said, immediately, "that would be unkind to the poor mother bird; let them remain and watch for the little young birds."

"So I say," exclaimed Allie. "I know what it is, it is the little sparrow so common everywhere about here — the Savanna sparrow; we've got all the nests and eggs we want at home; we'll leave this for the old bird."

"I think it's awful mean to take the whole nest and eggs of any bird," said Eva. "I wouldn't be so mean — unless it was an old crow or a cat-bird," added she.

Eva cordially detested a cat-bird.

"I hate it," said Eva; "it's nothing but a regular old maid scold; it can't sing, and it stays in the dark — inside of the pines about the door at home, and it won't do anything but fuss from morning to night."

"But the cat-bird loves its young just as much as the little sparrow," laughed Freddie.

"I don't care," retorted Eva, with considerable force; "I don't believe it; it couldn't."

As this argument was conclusive, and nobody seemed disposed to dispute it, the party proceeded up the hill, leaving the sparrow's nest, first having marked the place so that they would know it again, and were soon on the

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top viewing the sights on either hand. The view was clear and sharply defined everywhere, although the shadows from an occasional dark cloud overhead cast dark reflections on the land and water below them.

While they were watching these shadows on the water, Freddie, looking up, saw an apparently long black line approaching them from over the hill and inland.

"Get down, quick," cried he in a whisper; "there's a big flock of birds coming."

The party all squatted down, and the long black line came on, nearer and nearer. Soon a low qu-qu-qu-like whistle reached them, and suddenly, with a grand swish a whole flock of curlews passed by them to the left, and disappeared over the slope.

"Oh, dear! where's my gun?" cried Allie in a most despondent tone, as the last bird was gone.

"I say, Allie," cried Fred, "let's go off on a grand curlew hunt this afternoon."

"Humph," muttered Allie; "we'll have to load our shells first."

"Well, let's go back and do it."

And the boys, ever restless and eager for something new to occupy their time, started off on a run down the hill, leaving John and Eva to come home alone at their own time and convenience.

In about an hour the boys had each loaded a dozen large shells for curlew and other big birds; half a dozen very large ones with heavy shot for gulls; and half a dozen for small birds, charged with very fine shot. Armed with these the boys started off down the bay in the direction whither they had seen the curlews fly, for a grand hunt, bound to shoot some birds if they "had to stay out all day and all night to do it," so Allie said.

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CHAPTER VII.

THE BOYS EXPLORE THE COUNTRY AND FIND A CAVE.

THEY first took the path toward the head of the bay, and were soon struggling along among rocks and over big logs of driftwood, for a better position nearer the beach or water's edge; they felt surer of finding signs of birds there than in the open meadow-land, at the right of them. In thus doing they were wise, for no sooner had they struck the beach than they stumbled directly upon a large flock of "Quebec curlews," as the boys still continued to call them, that were wading in the water and feeding close by. The flock started up with a shrill whistle, and made for the other side of the bay, but not until Allie had given them the contents of the left barrel of his gun, and killed two and wounded a third, which was soon splashing about in the water, just out of reach.

The firing of the gun awoke the echoes of the old rocks, and its roar reverberated for some seconds along the shore, waking up and starting flock after flock of small beach birds, and sanderlings, and one or two small companies of larger birds.

"There!" exclaimed Allie; "shall we spend the day in following up these small birds, or shall we go after the curlews?"

"I speak for the curlew!" cried Fred.

"So do I!" replied Allie.

Following along the shore, then, until they had reached

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the head of the bay, starting up innumerable small flocks of plovers and beach birds, on the way, the boys turned toward the hills and began to clamber up them, knowing that here, if anywhere, they would be likely to find the curlews, feeding on the slopes and table-lands, on a small low blackberry, much resembling the huckleberry, but which in the north is known, generally, by the name of the "curlew berry"; the curlew eats them so greedily as sometimes to color their flesh almost black.

Here the boys climbed and hunted, and hunted and climbed; crossing and recrossing the meadow lands of deep moss, sometimes dry, sometimes wet, from the overflow of small streams or marshy ponds, and where they would often sink to their knees. Then they would have to descend deep hollows and rocky ravines, to the depth, often, of a hundred feet or more, before they could ascend to the opposite side and continue their tramp. Now a dense patch of alders or low and gnarly fir and spruce, mingled with beech trees, would bar the way, and quite exhaust the patience of the young hunters.

"I declare!" exclaimed Freddie, after ascending a long, steep slope, "if we could only shoot something, or even see something, it wouldn't seem so bad; but here we are, still in sight of the bay, and have gone miles to get over one, and not a curlew in sight, even."

"Never mind!" said Allie, "we've nothing better to do, and we might as well make an exploring expedition of it, — for that's all it has been, so far."

"I think it's too rocky, here, for curlews. Allie, I say! let's climb up to the top of that big hill, and see the view."

The hill, in question, was an immense one, and towered up, at the left, some three or four hundred feet above

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where they then were, which must have been between one and two hundred feet above the bay; it was very rugged and irregular in outline, and presented high walls of almost perpendicular rock to be climbed, and one deep gorge stood directly in their path. Nevertheless, up the hill they started, at the word, and were soon struggling along over the rocks and wet boggy patches, up the steeps, toward the crest above.

"I declare!" exclaimed Allie, during one of their halts, "this is the worst hill climbing I ever attempted. I never could have got over that flat rock without running, in this world." The rock referred to was one such as often occurred along the hill slopes, wherever they went, smooth, flat along the lower part, and slowly sloping upward. "I'm glad it wasn't wet, like the small one we found below."

"I'm glad you told me how you did it," said Freddie. "I've been trying for over three months to get across it, and once I slipped and came near smashing my gun."

As he said this, Freddie, with a grand dash, rushed over and across the rock and gained in safety the opposite side; just then Allie fired his gun, and a small flock of five or six birds, about the size of robins, flew from a cover of birches near by, and crossed the ridge of the hill.

"Oh, dear!" cried Allie, in a voice of intense disgust. "A real, home robin, and I missed him. I'll follow that bird all over the hill!" and he began climbing, with most desperate courage, leaving Fred far in the rear.

Both boys were now nearing the top of the hill, and had come to the big chasm over which they were obliged to cross. It was a deep chasm, and rocky to its bottom, through which trickled a small stream.

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"It isn't very wide!" said Allie, "and the climbing looks easy along this side; I believe the higher up we go the easier it will be to cross it; let's follow it along a little ways."

The boys followed the edge of the gorge for a few rods, and found that instead of growing narrower it grew wider; but they also found that, as it grew in width it lessened in depth, and soon they were able to come to a crossing where, with very little climbing, they could easily make their way over the rocks, and through the alder and birch growths of the other side, and so on toward the top peak.

Standing on a flat rock, the boys had a very good outlook upon the side from which they had ascended, and the hills and table-lands behind them, but they had not yet reached the top, where they could look beyond. Just as they were turning to begin the work of climbing again, Allie saw his flock of birds, far to the right, in a little valley below them, flying here and there among the low bushes, in a field-like piece of table-land or meadow-patch, and half a mile away.

"No use!" said Freddie, "you can't get near to them."

"I say, Fred!" sang out Allie, already some rods down the slope, "stay where I can see you, only keep on climbing to the top, and I'll be there soon."

The last words were very faint, for Allie was already out of sight.

Freddie, disgusted and provoked, muttered to himself, "I'm glad he's the one to go, not I; we'll be tired enough before we get home, at any rate, without going on any more wild goose chases"; then he turned and began to climb again.

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A very little distance, now, brought Freddie to the top of the hill.

"There!" he exclaimed, as he stood on the top, where there was a low, flat rock, mossed over, and damp on one side where a little rill, the same probably that furnished the stream in the ravine below, slowly trickled its way through the moss and over the edge of the stone down to the rocks below. "There! I'm on the top, and I can see North, South, East and West. I can see the bay, the ocean, the chimney of our house, a flat meadow half-way between the water and the hills above and beyond it, and these hills and low valleys, and all sorts of country till we get almost around again; and then, glimmering in the distance, I see a lake and a pretty little valley, almost hidden among the rocks and spruces between it and us."

"Urbs antiqua fuit, ———" shouted Freddie, gesticulating.

"——— Tyrii tenuere coloni."

"Oh, dear! how does it go! it's so long since I've studied Virgil, that it sticks like a lump in my throat. Anyway!" he exclaimed, with a majestic wave of the hand, "I can shout with the poet:

'Ye rocks and crags, I'm with you once again!'

No, that's not it, exactly, 'with *ye* once again,' when I was never with them before! No, *that's* not right! *that'll* never do! It will never do to begin the 'Monarch of all I survey' business, because if I get to the 'my right there is none to dispute,' there'll be another fellow with a gun around, and then there'll have to be a duel or an apology, so I guess I'll stop short where I am, and sit down and wait for the other fellow," laughed Freddie, as

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he looked around for a good soft, easy seat, and suited the action to the words.

It was, indeed, a lovely view that stretched out on all sides, below and beyond; and while Freddie was gazing at it, reclining as he was upon his rocky couch, he utterly forgot to keep Allie in sight, and before five minutes were gone he was fast asleep.

Half an hour later he opened his eyes, rolled over, and began to rub them vigorously.

"Humph!" he muttered, "guess I must have been to sleep! Where am I, anyway! Allie!" he shouted, at the top of his voice, "where are you?"

"Here!" exclaimed a voice as loud as his call of "Allie" had been, causing him to start, really frightened. "Not a bit of doubt about your having been to sleep; a pretty sentry you'd make, wouldn't you? I thought you were going to keep where I could see you, so I could know how to get back; how could I see you when you were lying down?"

"I declare, Al! I forgot! that was careless."

"Never mind!" said Allie, "I'm safe, and so are the robins I went after, for they flew away before I was half there; I did want to get one, though, they reminded me so much of home, — but what a *splendid* view."

The boys remained here watching the scenery, for nearly an hour. They looked with longing eyes upon the glimmer of the water in the vale below them to their left, and speculated whether it were really a lake or not, and if so how large it might be, what were its surroundings, and how far away it was.

"I *should* like to go there, but 'tis too late to-night," said Allie. "We'll come some morning, and make a day

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of it exploring the whole valley, and take with us our guns and our botany cans."

"That's so!" said Freddie; "won't we have fun?"

After they had fully rested, the boys took up their guns once more and started to climb down the hill and return home. One of them proposed following the stream down. So both began wending their way down the rocks in the course of the little rill, which became larger as it descended, while the ravine enlarged so quickly that the boys presently found themselves in a rapidly deepening pit, with high walls on both sides of them, and only a little light, from the opening above, to guide them in the path, which, luckily, was not difficult to travel; while the water, now quite a good-sized stream, gushed and splashed in and out among the rocks here and there at their feet.

"Well, Allie! this is romantic," exclaimed Fred.

His voice almost frightened him, it sounded so hollow and oppressed.

"What did you say?" asked Allie, a step or so behind, and consequently above him, "the water makes so much noise I can hardly hear you!"

"I don't remember!" said Fred. "I'm almost getting scared; it seems so like a dungeon here, I'm almost afraid to go on; say, Allie, where are you? ain't you afraid?"

"Come! let's go on, and not be foolish. How they'd laugh at us at home."

Freddie almost blushed at himself as he thought first of backing out, then of stopping and telling Allie to go on ahead: finally he pushed forward boldly as he descended further into the gully, when suddenly, without a word, he disappeared.

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"Freddie!" exclaimed Allie, "where are you?" but not a sound returned.

Allie cautiously approached the spot where he had last seen Fred, feeling his way along, at every step, with a long stick which he held some distance in advance. Suddenly the water disappeared down a long fall; Allie would have gone with it, had he not thus felt his way along with his stick. Stepping carefully on the edge, and close to the wall of the rock, he was just able to peer over and into the distance below.—The fall seemed to be some ten feet deep, and to end in a pool of water. There was no way to get down, except by the most difficult and careful climbing along the side where he stood. This could never have been done at all but for the long stick which Allie held; bracing this, carefully, upon the opposite side, he managed to get down a few feet, and then, with much difficulty, reached the bottom of the chasm. He was standing upon a small flat rock at the brink of a pool several feet deep, of dark water, the water from above pouring down into it at most furious rate. The path seemed plain enough ahead, but where was Fred?

In a few moments, after his eyes became accustomed to the darkness, Allie perceived a faint glimmer of light coming from directly behind the water-fall, and playing upon the surface of the water. The fall did not quite reach the rock on either side, and the gap seemed widest between the water and the face of the cliff on the opposite side from the one down which he had descended. Moving a little, Allie could see that there was a dark hollow in the rock just back of the water-fall, and into this he determined to make his way. —It could be done in one of two ways: by dashing

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across and through the waterfall, consequently getting thoroughly wet, and by crawling carefully around the edge. Allie chose the latter way, and was soon in a dark, damp cave, several feet high and about two feet wide; in the distance, apparently, there showed a faint gleam of light, reflected on the wall in front of him.

Allie was too excited to take very accurate observations as to the extent of the cave, but hastened to follow the light. While he was doing so, he suddenly became aware that something alive was moving in the cave, and at but a little distance ahead of him; then in another moment the light he was following became extinguished.

To say that Allie was frightened would be putting it mildly; he was more than frightened, he was actually terrified, and the cold perspiration began to start from every pore. He remembered that Mr. Ready had laughed as they went off, and said something about bears, and his breath came slow and thick. True, he had his gun with him, but he was too frightened even to think of it at that moment.

Just then Allie's foot slipped and hit a stone, which fell with a little splash into a pool of water close by. The noise evidently startled the strange creature at the other end of the cavern, for it immediately struck a match and called out:

"Hullo! what's that!"

"Thank the Lord!" cried Allie, "is that you, Freddie?"

"Yes! is that you, Allie? How you frightened me! I was just coming back to tell you where I had been. Let's get out first, come on;" and Fred turned and groped his way, followed by his brother, through a short

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passage to an opening, shut in by ferns and plant-growth, out into the open air.

"How good it is to get outside once more! but where are we?" asked Allie.

"I don't know," said Freddie, "but no one would ever find such a place in this world, unless they stumbled into it, as I did. I went right down into the water, and why I didn't break my neck I don't see, unless it was because the walls were so narrow that I *had* to land on my feet. I was soaking wet and the water still pouring over me, when I stuck my head through the falls, found the cave, and hurried into it and out here as you were doing."

"I'd have shot you for a bear," said Allie, "if I hadn't been too frightened when you came in."

"I'm awfully glad that you were too frightened, then," laughed Fred, wringing some of the water from his wet clothes. "Let's hurry home, I'm soaking, and we'll leave the rest of the cave and the gorge to be explored another time."

After getting some of the water out of his coat and pantaloons, Freddie and Allie started for home. They could estimate pretty nearly where the head of the bay was, and so they struck for it, rather than trust to "crossing lots," for the house.

Both boys took a careful look at the surroundings of the mouth of their cave. No one would ever have found it, it looked so like a large patch of ferns and plants, a little distance from the mass of rock that seemed a part and parcel of the solid hills.

"Who would ever imagine an opening, much less a cave, here?" said Freddie, as they turned their steps toward the head of the bay.

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It took the boys half an hour to reach the stream at the head of the bay. From this they could look back and see the entrance to the deep gully that they had followed so far.

"It looks almost as if we were afraid to follow that gully the rest of the way down," said Freddie. "I'll do it some day, though. It looks easy enough from here to follow it up to where the waterfall is, but it looked hard enough from the inside. *I'm* going back to follow the path down, before I ever go up to the falls this way. I'm not so big a coward now that I've been scared, and had a breath of air once more."

The boys were now on the beach. Freddie's gun was thoroughly wet, but, being a breech-loader, was still in good condition to fire, in spite of the many scratches that it had received on both stock and barrels. A good wiping out with a small pocket-cleaner, and a brush on the outside with his handkerchief, soon put it in good shooting trim, and a couple of new shells completed the work.

"Now for some birds! Sh-sh!" cried Allie, "here's where we shot the others; the flock may have returned, and then we can get another shot at them, perhaps."

The boys cautiously approached the rocks, behind which they expected to find the birds, and then with a cautious movement, and all prepared, they arose. At the same moment both guns sounded, and three dead birds remained, while about thirty flew rapidly across the bay, with a wild *Qu-qu-qu!* The boys hastened to pick up the spoils. A little farther on, another bird was found.

"Probably it is one we wounded and couldn't get when we came up," said Allie.

After walking a few steps the boys saw the flock

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whirling around, as if it wished to return. They both stooped behind a huge rock, close by, and began a vigorous whistling of *qu-qu-qu-qu-qu-qu! qu! qu! qu! qu!* when the flock soon wheeled and alighted in the same place where they had flown from. A second time the guns sounded, and five of the birds tumbled.

"That makes eleven birds!" said Allie. "Come, let's hurry up, it's growing awfully dark and beginning to sprinkle, too; come, hurry, or we shall get wet."

"We *are* wet," laughed Freddie; and both boys struck into a run, and just reached the house as the shower and night were upon them. Down came the rain in a perfect torrent of large drops, and had they been a few moments longer away they both would have been deluged.

"Oh, Freddie!" exclaimed Eva, "what do you think the men have got?"

"I'm sure I can't imagine, — what is it?"

"You must guess, before I tell you," said Eva.

"I shall never find out, then," laughed Fred, "for unless it's a whale, or the *Sea Foam*, or a puffing pig, or a big snapping-turtle — but I forgot, they don't have turtles in this country — I'm sure I can't imagine what it can be."

"Well, I'll tell you!" cried Eva, "'tis a seal. A bed-lammer, the men said. What's a bed-lammer?"

At this Allie laughed so long and so loud that Eva, really quite vexed, ran up to him and gave him a sound box on the ear, which brought him to his senses at once.

"I think you're *awfully* impolite," said Eva; "*I'm not* talking to you, at all; you're a mean, saucy fellow; go off! — Say, tell me, Freddie, what a bed-lammer is!"

Allie broke out again, but put his hands over his

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mouth and ran out of doors, where he broke into a loud whoop, that would have done credit to an Indian brave.

At that moment Mr. Ready came in, and Eva appealed to him, to know what a bed-lammer was. Mr. Ready laughed, too; and so Eva tabooed him.

"I don't care!" exclaimed that young miss, "I think you're all real mean. I'm sure the mate said that was the name, and I think some of you big men might tell me what it is instead of standing there and laughing, like a pack of idiots; you don't know what it is, anyway, more than I do."

There was no knowing to what extent Miss Eva's pique would have carried her, had not Mr. Ready offered to explain.

"I'll tell you, Miss Eva," he said, "we call it a *bellamer*, and it means simply a young harp seal before it has attained its full growth. It was a bellamer seal that the mate shot."

It was a fine specimen, and had been shot right through the head. The mate had seen him in the bay from the house, and, taking the old musket, had loaded it with two balls, and lay on the rocks watching for him for nearly an hour; at length the seal came quite near the shore, and the mate, taking deliberate aim, fired and killed him instantly. The body sank, as it was not very fat, but the water was so shallow that it was easily recovered by the men in one of the boats.

It was now too dark to see anything, or the boys would have rushed down to the wharf; as it was, they were too hungry and tired, and Fred too wet, to think of going out again, especially as it was still raining hard; so Fred went aloft to change his clothes and put on some dry ones, while Allie related their adventures.

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Eva was especially delighted at the idea of there being a cave to explore, and only wished that she were a man and that it was daytime so that she might go right off and explore it. She said that she was sure that it must be full of money; and then she began to wonder if there might not be bears in there too, — and so she concluded that it was just as well that she wasn't a man, and that some one else could do the exploring first, so as to be sure that it was all right; then, she thought, it must be splendid fun rambling about in lone, narrow passages, and high dome-like caverns, and finding nooks and corners never known to have existed before.

"Then we can fit it up and live in it all winter, if we have to stay here so long," said Eva.

"I hate to spoil all your dreams, Eva," said Allie, "but the cave we found is so small that you must crawl into it on your hands and knees, and then it will hardly let you stand up in it; and it may be only a little hollow place in the rock and not a real cave. There isn't much limestone rock here, and so our cave can't be very big."

Without heeding Allie's remark, Eva continued, "And then, after it is all nicely cleaned up, we will have a fountain in the center of the big room with the dome-like roof, and make some seats around the sides, and call it our dance hall, like the Luray caverns. We'll have a fine time, Freddie, won't we!" cried Eva, enthusiastically.

"Of course we will," said Freddie, "and then we will have one room for a conservatory, and plant some of all the different flowers we can find."

"There, now, you're laughing at me!" cried Eva. "If you'd eat your supper, it would keep you busy long enough to make you have some sense."

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By this time the boys' supper was ready, the others having had theirs, and both sat down and made quick work of hot coffee, fried flounders, corn-meal bread, and crisp, brown biscuits; just the kind of supper for two almost famished hunters.

"I declare!" exclaimed Allie, as he was taking a large piece of biscuit and his third cup of coffee. "Get my bag, Max, and see the birds I've got. They'll make a fine '*Entrée*' for our dinner to-morrow."

Max produced the bag and the birds, and was soon picking the latter, putting the feathers into a large bushel basket. "I'm going to save them for a pillow," said he.

And thus, with pleasant, happy talk the evening passed away.

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CHAPTER VIII.

EXPLORING THE CAVE AND WHAT WAS FOUND THERE.

THE next day the boys prepared to follow out the explorations begun on the day previous, and to the delight and surprise of all, Mr. Taylor and John signified their intention of accompanying them.

After breakfast Max put up, in a basket, a fine lunch, to which he added a large bottle of spruce beer; and with these and the guns, Mr. Taylor as usual taking his fishing tackle that he might try if the stream contained any trout, they all started off.

The boys had decided to reconsider their plan of going directly to the cave, and to follow up the ravine to the waterfall instead. It was at last concluded to let Mr. Taylor fish up the stream, in the ravine, while the three boys went at once to the cave and began explorations.

"I shall reach you before you get far out of sight," laughed Mr. Taylor. "I imagine that the stream is not so large as to detain me a very great while, or the fish so abundant as to require any assistance," he added, good-humoredly.

This just suited the boys, and so they trudged along, Mr. Taylor with his fish-pole over his shoulder, John with the basket of provisions in his hand, and the two other boys with their guns on their shoulders, like a party of "raw recruits from the army," as Mr. Taylor said.

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"I'm always to be found where there is any fishing, boys," remarked Mr. Taylor, "so do not wait for me at lunch if I am late."

With a parting "good luck" on both sides, the party divided.

"I declare," exclaimed Freddie, "I was bold enough while we were at home talking about it, but now that we are getting nearer and nearer the place, I am almost scared again; just supposing there *should* be a bear in there, he'd be sure to kill some one of us before we could get a shot into him."

"Well, *I'm* not frightened," replied Allie, "but I *did* have the shakes yesterday, when I was in all that darkness and trying to find my way out somewhere, I knew not where, and I saw you and heard you moving, Fred."

"I don't wonder at it, and perhaps *I* wasn't scared, too. I thought that if it was a bear it would bite me, and if it was you you'd shoot me, and for a moment it flashed upon me how incautious I was, anyway, to go in there so, — yet I'm glad that I did."

"I don't see how you tumbled down that gully without killing yourself."

"Well, four feet of water is not so hard a cushion to fall on as nothing but rocks would be."

"But I can't see how you could fall down ten feet into four feet of water without a hurt, a sprain, or a scratch," replied Allie.

"I fell right down; the piece of rock I stepped on broke off, and I guess the air knew what a ducking I was to get and so *buoyed* me up," laughed Freddie.

"I guess you *buoyed* it; but here we are at the mouth."

"Where?" asked John.

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"There now, if you'll find it," said Freddie, "I'll give you first shot when the curlews come, if we see any to-day."

John then began to search in every nook and corner, for the entrance to the cave, hunting high and low for it, but without success, and he finally had to give it up.

"I can't find it, boys," said John.

Freddie and Allie were sitting on the very rock that concealed the entrance, and so Allie laughed and said:

"Shut your eyes, John, for just a minute."

John shut his eyes, and Freddie immediately disappeared in the cavity, as Allie held back the ferns and plant growths carefully and as carefully replaced them.

"Now look, John."

John opened his eyes and saw that Freddie had disappeared, but even then he could not find the opening.

"I'll give you one more chance," said Allie, laughing. "Now turn your face directly opposite me, shut your eyes, take ten steps forward, stop and count one hundred, and then see if you can find me."

John's face was no sooner turned, than Allie very quickly pushed the leaves away from the hole and crawled in backwards without making any noise or disturbing the plants, and then brought them over the hole once more.

"Come, John; find me," he cried; then he dodged back to await results.

John's good spirit unconsciously guided him to the right place this time, for, as he stooped to pluck a small flower, he caught sight of Allie's eyes laughing at him through the leaves he was about to pluck, and in another instant all were inside the cave together.

"I declare," exclaimed John, "no one would ever find you here in this world, if you should ever want to hide;

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but let's go on and see what we can find. Are your guns loaded for bears?"

As he said this, John deposited the basket in a safe place, first taking out a tallow candle, which he proceeded to fasten in an inclined position to a small stick which he carried, and then to light.

"All on board for Luray Caverns and Mammoth Cave," shouted John.

"Bears ahoy!" added Allie, and the three boys began carefully to rise.

"There! I'm standing up!" cried Freddie, some yards in advance; "and I can't reach the top yet. Hurry up with the light."

A few paces from the entrance the boys found that not only could they stand upright, but that there were several feet to spare beween them and the roof of the cavern; the room in which they were was as near round as such a place, with its jagged and loose rocks all around and above and below, could be; it grew narrower to the entrance, about a rod from them, and flattened somewhat at the sides toward the waterfall, which they could plainly see from where they stood.

On the opposite side of the wall, toward the heart of the mountain, the walls also narrowed, and in the distance the boys could catch a glance of something that reflected like the surface of a mirror.

"Eva's lake, I declare," exclaimed Fred. "I wish Mr. Taylor was here."

Preceded by John, who carried the torch, they then passed through a dark, narrow passage, the stones at the bottom of which formed a flight of steps, that increased in height as they descended, until they came into an immense natural cavern, arched and roofed overhead, and

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all black in front of them. The walls came down with ragged sides close to the floor of the cavern, which was covered everywhere with chipped blocks of various shapes and sizes, mostly with flat surfaces, except just to the right of the center, where the trickling water had formed itself into a regular pond of size and shape corresponding to the cavern in which it was situated, but with its water as black as ink.

"I tell you what it is," said John, and his voice sounded hollow, and strangely compressed and faint, "supposing our candle should give out? What should we do? I'm not going any further until Mr. Taylor comes; let's go back and get him; 'twill be ever so much better to do so."

As the vote was unanimous, the boys turned and fled for the opening, like startled deer.

"Let's go down the ravine, and see if we can find him," said Freddie, now fully recovered from his fright.

To this, also, all consented unanimously; and so they crowded past the waterfall and began to descend the chasm.

There were several interesting places that the boys would have liked to examine on their way down, but they were in too great a hurry to stop for them then. At one place a flight of natural breaks in the wall presented a series of steps to the top of the chasm. John believed that he could get to the top of this without much difficulty and, as usual, offered to bet almost anything in his possession with Freddie that he could do it. At another time, apparently rare ferns and flowers grew in large clusters on both sides of the wall. The attractions multiplied as they proceeded, until at length they could see the outside world again, and had no difficulty

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in distinguishing in a tall, solitary, dark figure, just ahead of them, the form of Mr. Taylor.

The solemn array of the three boys walking slowly along, down the ascent, in Indian file, and bearing a lighted torch, — which John had not yet extinguished, — was enough to appal the senses of any one, and especially of a man of a nervous temperament.

Mr. Taylor looked up suddenly, and caught sight of them when he was least expecting it, and his hearty, rousing "Great Scott, boys! what's the matter?" scared them so that John dropped his candle into the water, which immediately extinguished it, and all came to such an unexpected halt that Mr. Taylor repeated his exclamation:

"Great Scott! don't scare the life out of me. Speak, some one!"

"We are all here, safe and sound," exclaimed Allie.

"Well, I should think so. I thought it was a funeral train, or one of Washington Irving's bands of Castilian Moors resurrected. What's the matter, anyway?"

As no one else seemed to answer, Allie spoke up and said:

"Nothing's the matter, Mr. Taylor, except that we have found an awfully big, dark cave, and we want you to come and help us to explore it."

Mr. Taylor took in the situation at once, and, throwing back his head he haw-hawed, long and loud.

"Well, well," exclaimed Mr. Taylor; and after a good hearty laugh, concluding that there were no more trout in the stream between him and the falls, laid aside his fishing-rod, wound up his lines, placed them in his pocket, and prepared to accompany the boys. Picking up a good-sized, rounded pebble that happened in his

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way, he remarked, with a characteristic and peculiar toss of his head:

"There; that's the kind of a weapon to hit anything with. Come on, now, boys."

The boys led the way, at once, back into the ravine and toward the cave, Mr. Taylor following in the rear, tossing his stone from one hand to the other, as if to test its handiness, and examining the curious structure of the ravine itself.

"You ought to get a number of new varieties of plants here, boys," he remarked, after a long interval of silence, during which the group plodded slowly along over the inequalities of the way; "I can count as many as a dozen without stopping or giving myself much trouble about it; you ought to come here with your botany cans."

"We mean to, sometime, when we can get the time," said Allie. "We are too much excited about our cave, just now, to think of much of anything else."

"Your cave," said Mr. Taylor, sarcastically; "I'm prepared to see a small hole several feet square, with rock all around it, save at the entrance—a capital abode for bears and carcajous; perhaps we shall come across one there; who knows?"

As no one answered this tremendous question, it was doubtless presumed that no one knew, and so the subject passed.

"Aye! look! see there!" cried Mr. Taylor.

Everybody paused at once as if some great danger threatened.

"Go on," said Mr. Taylor, "'twas only a trout there in that pool; I have a great mind to stop and fish here; I believe that we might catch some fish."

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"Oh, don't, Mr. Taylor," pleaded Freddie; "do come on with us."

"He's coming," said Allie; "he is only trying to bother us."

"Great Scott!" exclaimed that gentleman, "I believe that, in this country, the smaller the stream the better the fishing; we have scared up no less than five good-sized trout since we entered this ravine, and the stream is so small that it didn't look worth throwing the line into; we must come back here and try for fish."

By this time they had reached the falls, and, with much difficulty, succeeded in crowding past the water, into the opening.

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Mr. Taylor, for about the hundredth time, "this *is* quite a hole, and no mistake. How many candles have you?"

"Three," replied John; "one apiece for us boys."

"And none for me? How did you think *I* was going to get along? by burning matches? Well, never mind; now give me one of them."

John found the basket and passed the candle to Mr. Taylor.

"There now," said Mr. Taylor, "fasten the one on your stick tight, and light it, and go on."

John did as requested, and soon they had passed through the opening into the cave itself.

"Well, this *is* quite a place," said Mr. Taylor, examining its sides, walls, and general structure carefully and as well as the dim light of the candle would permit. "Now to business." As he said this he selected a location in the wall near the entrance, as high up as he could reach, where, on a small flat projection of rock, he first turned his candle, which he had lighted from John's,

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until a small quantity of hot tallow had dropped upon the rock, then quickly pressing the bottom of the candle into it he held it firmly until it had hardened. "There; now we have an objective point, from which to go and to which we may return. Now put the other candle carefully in your pocket, and let's go forward."

Mr. Taylor then took the torch from John and held it up over him; the roof of the cavern was not high, and the rocks could be easily seen, but beyond all was darkness.

"Come on, then," said Mr. Taylor. "Have your matches handy in case the torch goes out; here, give me a few. We can see the candle at the mouth there a good distance if we go in a straight line, but if we can't we are as bad off as if we didn't have it at all."

When the party had proceeded onward a few rods, and past the lake, as the boys persisted in calling it, the walls at the sides began to converge again, and soon presented another narrow opening.

Here it was found that the passage divided; at the left the opening seemed larger and extended for a distance on in the same direction; at the right there appeared to be a solid wall of rock close to the opening. Holding up the candle, Mr. Taylor perceived that there was a sort of opening or open space above, that the rocks, instead of being a solid, perpendicular wall, inclined somewhat, and that with a little difficulty the wall might be climbed.

"Where shall we go?" remarked Mr. Taylor, "to the left or to the right?"

"To the right," cried all the boys. "Climb the steps, and we will follow."

It took some minutes of hard scrambling before the

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top was reached, and when it was, the candle showed a wide, low, flat-bottomed cavern that extended, much like the loft of a large hay barn, back, how far no one knew.

After a short rest the party went forward several rods, when a loud sputtering and sissing noise, a pair of coal-like eyes, and the wild dash of some savage animal, brought them suddenly up standing. It caused even Mr. Taylor to be unnerved for a moment, and dropping the torch, all rushed back for the opening, the strange animal snarling, and making repeated forward dashes at them only to retreat again, until everything was one grand scene of confusion. Having turned the corner, they no longer had the light of their candle to guide them, so that they could not even tell how near the passage-way to the lower cavern they might be. Their own candle had gone out, and the momentary fear of the strange and unknown animal that was attacking them caused a general stampede.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Mr. Taylor, who was the first to regain his presence of mind.

Another great rush and spitting.

"Give me that gun, you useless scarecrow of a nuisance of a small boy," shouted he to Allie. "What have you got in her?"

"Double B's," Allie managed to whisper, handing the gun over, glad to find someone with courage enough to master the situation.

"Both barrels?"

"Yes."

Mr. Taylor took the gun, cocked one barrel, and awaited the next onslaught of the strange and savage animal that had retreated into the darkness of the cavern.

A few moments of silence ensued, when, with a savage

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spit, on it rushed again. Aiming directly at its eyes, Mr. Taylor pulled the trigger.

The report resounded loud enough to wake the dead. It almost deafened the boys, and even Mr. Taylor himself dropped the gun and clapped his hands over his ears to stop the ringing sensation; but that was not all. The boys were still on the floor of the cavern when two, it seemed to them twenty-two, small, furry, lively little bodies, dashed out into their midst and began to claw and spit in great style. At the same time an angry snarl, and another dash from the interior of the cave, followed by a second report of the gun, caused such a commotion that it was again some minutes before quiet was restored.

The boys, on finding that the small, furry animals could do no harm, had secured them; Mr. Taylor relighted the torch, and after depositing the candle, also lighted, in a niche of the wall, was proceeding toward the interior of the cavern.

"There; I guess we've cleaned 'em all out," said that gentleman. "Two cats don't generally breed in the same place."

"Two what?" cried Allie, who had regained the use of his tongue and his breath, in spite of the dense, almost suffocating gun-powder smoke, filling the air of the cavern.

"Cats!" ejaculated Mr. Taylor, from the inner recesses of the cave. "Canada lynx! Here, come in here, you good-for-nothing lazy fellows! what are you afraid of now? Come in here and help me."

Freddie remained, holding the two young cats, for such they proved to be, and John and Allie started into the cavern after Mr. Taylor.

"Where's that stick?" said Mr. Taylor.

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"Here," shouted John, handing him the stick which he had used as a walking-stick all the way.

A tremendous screech and several heavy blows followed, and then all was still; and Mr. Taylor appeared, dragging after him, by the hind-leg, a huge, grayish-furred animal, which he deposited near the boys, and returned; presently he emerged again, bringing a second animal, similar in size and appearance to the first.

"There, now," said he, "let's get out of here, and into the air; I'm about choked to death."

Taking the animals and candles with them, they had soon descended the rude step-like passage, and reached the larger cavern; from thence they passed into the smaller one.

Resting here for a few moments, and refreshing themselves from the water of the falls, which was very clear and cold, they all crawled out into the air, taking the animals, and the basket of provisions with them.

"Whew!" exclaimed Freddie; "I can hardly see."

All the boys rubbed their eyes, and even Mr. Taylor indulged freely in his favorite ejaculation.

"Well, boys," exclaimed he, "I think we have earned our dinners; let's see what you have got in that basket."

While John was opening the basket, and spreading out the contents on a clean rock near by, Mr. Taylor was talking about the animals recently captured.

"There, now, we can begin the fur business in good style," said he, "with two lynx skins in capital condition, and two kits. We'd better tie the little animals, or they may get away."

Producing a stout piece of twine, he quickly made a pair of artificial muzzles, which with some difficulty he succeeded in slipping over the noses of the kittens, who

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stoutly resisted, spitting and scratching most vigorously meanwhile. Then passing it around their necks, he fastened it, and then tied the other ends of the cord to a small spruce shrub near by. They were beautiful little animals, with long, gray, downy fur, and with wild, sparkling eyes. They were just old enough to have a will of their own, and they struggled, and spat, and clawed, and rolled over and over in perfect fits of fury, much to the amusement of all. The two large cats were immense creatures, with long, spotted fur of a gray and white mixture, and long pointed ears, well furred behind. The legs were unusually stout for the length of the animals, and their paws large and furred to the very tips with tufts of soft fur.

"Do get that dinner ready," sung out Allie.

"So I say," said Mr. Taylor.

"I was only going after some water," said John.

"Never mind water," replied Mr. Taylor, "when there is such spruce beer as this."

The provisions were now all arranged on the stone, and each proceeded to help himself.

A pot of apple sauce began rapidly to vanish, as did also an immense pile of sandwiches; and some large pieces of brown pound cake and cheese that Max had added to the plentiful supply, disappeared like so many wafers before the hunters and cavern explorers.

"I haven't relished anything so much since I was a small boy," exclaimed Mr. Taylor, "and used to sit up nights to read Mayne Reid's 'Bear Hunters,' and 'The Cliff Climbers,' and such like stories. It is really most interesting and exciting, and quite realizes some of my youthful dreams. Hurry the scraps now into the basket there, and let's go back; perhaps we may meet with

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some other adventure, as we have not yet discovered the end of either branch of our cavern."

When they had finished, and John had collected together the remaining pieces and put them in the basket, all re-entered the cave. Mr. Taylor groped his way to the second entrance of the cave, lighted the candle and fastened it where it would shed its rays on the falls, and up the rough stairway and far out to the left extension in front of them.

"Let's follow out the loft first," said Mr. Taylor, this time taking the lighted torch from John, and then proceeded in advance, bearing it so as to reveal the extent of the walls of the cave. "Come on."

The party proceeded on in silence for a number of rods, when both the torch and its bearer came to a halt.

"We can't get any further here," said Mr. Taylor, "it's all solid rock."

A mass of stones, small sticks, and a good deal of fur, with one or two small bones, probably the bed of the lynxes, in one corner of the floor, were all that could be found.

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CHAPTER IX.

RETURNING HOME, MR. TAYLOR GIVES THE BOYS SOME BITS OF INTERESTING INFORMATION.

"NOW let's take the other side," said Mr. Taylor, as he turned, and the whole party descended to the floor below. — "What a capital place to hide in; no one would ever think of finding us here. They would pass by this opening, without ever thinking there was an upper cave, and go right on in the lower cavern. Now let's see what we can find here!"

They were here aided by a double light: the candle, just inside the entrance to the second, really the third room to the cavern, and the torch which they bore. With this double light it did not take long to come to the extremity of the left division of the cave, which ended in a good-sized opening in the face of an almost perpendicular cliff, overlooking the long point of land which separated the bay from the sea. Through the opening poured quite a heavy stream of water, flowing through the rocks at the right, just inside the entrance. Then it dashed down the precipitous rocks, fully one hundred feet, before it formed itself into a stream that was lost in the growth of spruce and other vegetation below.

"Well, boys!" said Mr. Taylor. "We have really done ourselves proud. A capital place to live in, provided there were no other quarters. And, at any rate, a capital place for a day's pleasuring for the ladies; we must have them up here."

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"How *can* we get them up here?" queried Freddie, gazing at the precipitous descent from the cave's mouth.

"Oh, they can get up here, with a little trouble!" replied Mr. Taylor. "I think we can help them up without much difficulty. And, if not, we might turn the stream of water at the falls sufficiently to let them pass there; I am sure they would enjoy it all the more, coming through the ravine, or coming up here and returning through the ravine; and the walking there is not difficult."

"Hooray!" exclaimed Freddie. "What day shall it be? the picnic I mean."

"We must let the ladies arrange that," said Mr. Taylor, "they can tell best when it will be most convenient for them."

"Hooray for Wild Cat Cave!" shouted Allie.

The boys all responded, most heartily, and even Mr. Taylor gave his hat a patronizing toss around his head.

"Now, if we wished to be *very* secret here," said Allie, "we could pile some rocks in the mouth, just inside the opening, and if anybody came, they would think that there was no cave at all, but only a path for the water."

"We could do the same at the falls, too," said Freddie. "Then nobody would find us, if John couldn't when we were only six feet away from him. We could bar up the inside of the other entrance, and then live here all by ourselves."

"You boys have certainly found a very secret place, if occasion should ever require us to use it. It is probably secure from everything, save earthquakes; and they say earthquakes do sometimes reach as far as this benighted coast."

"But where are we, anyway!" exclaimed Freddie to Mr. Taylor.

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"Well! we are probably on the coast of Labrador, where we started for, somewhere, but no one can tell just where; whether at the entrance of the Straits of Belle Isle, or much farther down the coast, near Cape Whittle. We are near one of these two places, without any doubt."

"Well, I only hope we won't have to go home until after the summer has passed," said Allie. "We are having too good a time to want to lose it, — so far, at least."

"I think you have made a capital beginning of the season's sport, and we are already as finely established as if we had been living here a year, or more, and all ready for the fishery; but let us return home, it is getting well into the afternoon, and, with our load, we can reach home in time to have not only your curlew pot-pie, but also some fresh trout, too. I left a string of about a dozen in a small pool near where my rod is."

The boys now, reluctantly, retraced their steps and prepared to return home.

"Now I will take one of the cats on my shoulder and go down the ravine after my pole and trout," said Mr. Taylor, "and meet you at the head of the bay. You can take the kittens, tie them into the basket, and carry the other cat between you and meet me there."

This was assented to, and the larger of the two cats was dragged through the opening of the cave to Mr. Taylor, who immediately threw it over his shoulder and started after his fish and pole, down the ravine.

The boys, after a great deal of trouble, succeeded in tying the legs of the kittens and fastening them securely into the basket. Fred carried the basket, and Allie and John took hold of the fore and hind legs of the large,

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and really heavy cat, and, carrying it between them, all went down the hill to the head of the bay, determined to reach there, if possible, before Mr. Taylor.

The lynx was really much heavier than the boys had imagined; and, in carrying it down the hillside, they were obliged to make frequent stops, so that by the time they had reached the bottom of the descent they found Mr. Taylor patiently waiting for them with his pole over his shoulder, and a string of nice, large trout in his hand.

"Well, boys! All ready for home?" asked Mr. Taylor.

"Yes, sir!" replied John.

"Well, then, let's hurry; 'tis getting on toward supper-time, and they'll be waiting for us. You know we told them that we would be sure to be back for supper."

"Mr. Taylor!" asked Freddie. "Don't the Indians eat these animals? It seems as if I had heard, somewhere, that they did."

"Oh, yes! they are really very good eating, I believe. We will try it, at any rate. Max will cook a small bit for us, and then we will test it. It is not a rule, however, that everything that an Indian eats is good for a white man. The Indians will eat foxes, they say, when they can get nothing else for food. You see the Indians here are somewhat different from those in other parts of the country. They are poor, unsociable creatures; half-fed, and consequently half-starved. In the winter they can scarcely get enough to keep the life in their bodies, and so they get used to eating the animals that they secure by traps and with their guns for their fur. The animal thus serves a double purpose; and, I believe, that even the bones, mashed up, are made into soup which contains a little nourishing matter. The

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Indians, they tell me," continued Mr. Taylor, "consider the flesh of the beaver and of the otter the best; they also eat the martin, and the badger, though I am not so sure about the latter. You will have no doubt but that they live on almost anything that they can get, when you come to see them. They are dirty, indolent, hungry-looking fellows. Their cheek-bones are quite prominent, and their cheeks full and flabby; their eyes are dark and lusterless; their hair black, coarse, and falls so naturally on either side and around the head as to look more like a wig than a natural head of hair. Some of them have short, bristly moustaches, and some whiskers of the same kind, but I do not seem to recollect that any I saw had both."

"How do you know so much about them, Mr. Taylor?" asked Allie.

"Oh, you forget that I have been here a number of times before, and have seen them, — and ate, slept, and traded with them. I spent six weeks of one spring, almost entirely with them, — that is, I sailed with a trader who dealt in furs among them; they came on board from morning to night, and gave their furs in exchange for tea, molasses, flour, butter, clothes, and all sorts of trade, including guns and ammunition. And a very curious fact is, that the smaller the bore of the gun, and I believe too the longer the barrel, the better they liked it. An Indian shoots twice as heavy a charge in his gun as we would, and yet seldom meets with an accident. They shoot all the wild animals, bear and deer, large gulls and seabirds with heavy wings and protected with thick mattings of feathers, and at seals, and they seldom miss their game. They have thus made hunting a science, and will shoot fourteen bore double or

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single barrelled guns, with large shot, and often with balls besides. An Indian loads his gun with a heavy charge of, say, BB shot for ordinary game. If he sees a deer, or a bear, or seal, he will drop one or even two balls, just a size smaller than the bore of his gun, into the barrel, and fire the whole charge at the animal; but look at that immense flock of gulls on the water there!"

"Yes!" exclaimed Allie. "I can see the three kinds, the black-backed, the glaucus, ice gull or burgomaster, and the common herring gull; but tell us some more about the Indians, Mr. Taylor; we are all very much interested in knowing about them."

"There is another queer sort of food that the Indians eat," continued Mr. Taylor, "and the poor whites, too, when they can get them, and have nothing better; that is the young gulls. It is the old ones only, they say, that taste fishy; but here we are nearing home, and you may have a chance, sometime, to see the Indians yourselves, which will be better than anything that I can tell you about them."

"I don't think so!" said Fred.

By this time they had reached the wharf, and heard Eva calling to them from the house, to know what those great gray things that they had with them were.

"Rabbits!" laughed Fred.

"Oh, what big rabbits!" said Eva, who always believed everything Fred told her, "and what little ears they've got. Oh, mamma! come and see the big rabbits that the boys have brought."

Having now reached the house, Allie loosed the kittens and let them run to the end of their string, which he tied on the door latch. The young animals immediately

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commenced their snarling and spitting again, scratching at everything that came near them.

"Oh, dear! what *have* you got there!" asked Eva, excitedly.

"A present for you!" said Freddie.

"A present for me! Oh! what a pretty and what a queer present. Are they young rabbits?"

Everybody in the room laughed so long and so heartily at this, that Eva was at first undecided whether to resent it, or to let it pass by unnoticed. She only remarked:

"Well, Freddie said they were rabbits, and I never saw a live one; how should *I* know!"

"Cats!" said John. "Is-s-s-s, take 'em!"

There not being anything to take, the young animals amused themselves by retreating into the corner and spitting defiance at their imaginary enemies.

"Go, pet them!" said Allie. "I've handled them all over, — they won't hurt you."

Eva went up to them, and, after a little timidity on her part, took one of them in her arms; but it struggled and fought so that she could not hold it. Mrs. Benton also came in, and watched, with great interest, the young animals, and also instructed Eva where and how to make a nice bed for them.

While she was doing this, the men began to gather around and look in at the door to see the wild cats, both big and little, and hear the story of their capture. Mr. Taylor told it all, and to all: of the finding and exploring of the cave, the way in which he had been frightened in the first place, the dropping of their light, and the scare they had all received.

Everybody was excited; and the news went from one to another until soon, the whole party were gathered

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about the door-way. The boys were heroes for first discovering the cave, — and Fred in particular, for falling down the ravine and finding it. Mr. Taylor's skill as a hunter, and his capabilities to "master the situation," was placed at once beyond dispute. It was always one of his pet expressions to the boys, about any particular lesson; "don't come to recite," he would say, "until you can fully master the situation."

"I think! Mr. Taylor," said one of the boys, "that you did fully master the situation, this time."

"I had to," replied Mr. Taylor, not a bit conceited, but laughing at this turning of his own advice upon himself. "I had to master it, or it would have mastered me; and two full grown wild cats could have done an immense amount of clawing."

"Well, boys!" laughed Max. "I guess you will be ready for your '*entry*' of pot-pie; here it is, all hot and smoking," and he drew out of the oven a huge dish, all covered over with rich, brown pie-crust, and set it on the table. "But if you don't like the Quebec Curlew, as you call them, perhaps you will like the real curlew the better;" and he drew out another and still larger dish, which he placed on the other end of the table.

"Where did they come from!" cried Allie.

"*That* pie you got!" said Max, pointing to the smaller one, "and that pie," pointing to the larger, "the men got this morning. I guess they found the flock you were hunting in a cave for," laughed Max.

The rest of the dinner was soon on the table, and all sat down, four ravenously hungry people with the rest, and began to dispose of the good food that had been prepared for them.

"Oh, yes!" remarked Mr. Benton, pleasantly, when

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they had finished their supper, "I'll give you $5 apiece for the fur. I can cut it up into trimmings and make twice that on each skin, easily."

"People don't sell many things, when they're cast away on desert islands," said Fred. "I don't know whom you will sell them to, unless it be to the gulls to trim their feathers with when they get them dirty."

"How will the gulls pay for them?" asked Mr. Taylor.

"Why! trade eggs for them," cried Fred.

All laughed at this "desert island" wit, which put everybody in good humor.

"On that principle," said Mr. Taylor, smiling, "don't you trade, as you can get the eggs anyway, and you had better not give away something of value for something that you can get without trading for it."

"Sound principle! sound principle!" chuckled Mr. Benton. "I don't mind it, if it *is* somewhat against my interests."

"Oh dear!" sighed Fred. "What is the use of having money, anyway. If you can have a good time, and have all you need without it, why should people fret their lives away for money."

"You are getting to be quite a philosopher, Fred," said Allie.

"It's *my* opinion," continued Freddie, not heeding the interruption, "that the Indians are a great deal happier than a great many of the white people around them. In summer they can hunt and fish and have plenty to eat, and can enjoy themselves; and in the winter they hunt and trap. I believe theirs is a splendid manner of passing life; I almost wish I was an Indian myself."

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"You might go where the Indians are," remarked Mr. Taylor, "and have the chief pick you out a fine, smoky-faced, dark-skinned partner, and then settle down with her, and turn Indian. Hunt for her, make love to her, and fight for her. Perhaps you might, in time, aspire to be chief of the Nasquapees or Montagnais. Then the other Indians would hunt for you, and you might stay at home, in your wigwam, and live in a lazy and inoffensive manner, in the sunshine of Indian indolence and easy living, and fancy either that you made the world, or that the world was made for you, or both. How would that suit you?" asked Mr. Taylor.

"Oh, that would be first-rate!" laughed Fred, "and you could come up here to trade with me, and I would sell you the seventh class furs for first class prices, and send you home again to meditate upon the 'poor Indian,'" he continued, in high glee.

Everybody laughed heartily, at this, at Mr. Taylor's expense.

"Certainly, but,—" replied Mr. Taylor, smiling, "my butter, which you would pay fifty cents a pound for, would be oleomargarine that cost me three cents a pound to make, and my lard would be refuse tallow from the candle factory, and my flour the refuse from the bakery, and my salt-pork, salt-horse."

Another laugh, apparently, annihilated poor Fred, but he answered, however:

"Oh, yes! I could make double profit then, too, by selling *you* the seal oil I had been in the habit of sending to Boston for your oleomargarine, and would be pretty sure of what I was eating."

How far this conversation might have gone on is not at all certain, for, at that moment, Mrs. Benton stopped

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them from a further continuance of it by remarking that, as the next day was Sunday, she hoped that Max would get enough wood so as not to have to chop any during the day.

Mrs. Benton's religion was of that old Puritan type which believed that "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." That "six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work, but the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt do no work, etc." Thus the good woman sought to get ready on Saturday for Sunday, and when Sunday came, to "keep it sacred."

"Yes'am!" replied Max, "I have plenty wood for to-morrow, unless it rains, and then I shall have some left over."

The boys raised such a shout at this, that Max looked around in considerable confusion and asked, "What did I say wrong? Perhaps I should have said, and even then, I think, I shall have some left over."

"That is correct and better English;" and Mrs. Benton nodded her head approvingly at the correction.

At last supper was finished; an hour later the dishes had all been washed and placed on their shelves, everything in the room put in order, the young wild cats assigned to nice, clean quarters, and the old ones hung up outside the house, on some nails, as high as could be reached, without a chair or ladder.

"Not that any one or anything will get them," said Mr. Taylor, who superintended the arrangement, "but 'tis well to have them high enough."

"I imagine that everybody is glad to have Sunday come!" said Mrs. Benton. "We've all had a hard week of it, we're all tired, and we all have a lot of work to do next week."

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"We shall begin fishing Monday, Mr. Ready," said Mr. Benton.

Since arriving on shore Mr. Ready's title of captain had been dropped, almost by common consent, and now, as Fred said, the title of "Esquire" seemed most appropriate "on account of the amount of running around he did, and the fatherly advice he gave others," and "the small amount of work he really did himself."

"Ah! yes, sir! I think it is about time to try the fishing," replied Mr. Ready, with a chuckle; "ten quintals a day from each of the boats ought to fill us up well, and we ought to get that, if there is anything in the shape of fish around here."

"I suppose everything is in order for the work," said Mr. Benton.

"Yes! I believe Mr. Cooper has everything ready to start the men off early Monday morning."

While Mr. Benton and Mr. Ready were carrying on a conversation about codfish and the fishery, the boys had wandered down the wharf with Mr. Taylor and were trying to catch enough flounders, or "flat-fish," for breakfast.

"If we could only get the bait to the bottom before the pesky little tomcods clean it off the hook, we might get something," said Allie.

"Put on an awful big sinker," suggested Fred, "then 'twill go down so fast they can't catch it."

"Risk them!" replied Allie. "They would all be after it then; however, I will try it once," he added.

There was a huge iron bolt lying near, and this Allie took and carefully fastened to his line, by a couple of half-hitches, and threw it over the edge of the wharf into the water. It struck with a splash and left a long

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line of bubbles, that were slightly phosphorescent in the twilight, as it rushed to the bottom; and Allie soon had the pleasure of hauling up an immense flounder; this raised the number to nine.

"There, 'tis getting too late to fish," said Allie, "I'm going to quit, and go to bed. I'm tired and sleepy."

And he hauled in his line and wound it up with an air of utter exhaustion. The other boys did the same, and all went up to the house together.

"Mr. Taylor!" exclaimed Freddie, on their way up the hill, "what is a carcajou?"

"What is it? Why, 'tis only another name for a badger. It is the Indian name. Their fur is long, coarse, and black, and of very little value, now. The animals used to be regarded as valuable fur animals, but they are getting scarcer and scarcer along the coast, so that furriers, they tell me, do not average half a dozen skins a season where they used to find them by the scores."

"Well!" said Allie, "I wish you would tell me if the different kinds of foxes are all different species. The white fox is surely a different kind from the red, and the gray and black from either."

"There you are wrong!" remarked Mr. Taylor. "They are now said to be of one species, and the common red fox the father of them all. There are light and dark colored skins of this; then we have the variety known as the patch fox, which is only a darker and blacker form of the red; after that the cross or cross-patch, with a lighter area in the center of the black, in the form of a bar down the back and another across the fore-shoulders. The gray or silver gray has, according as it is a poor, a medium, or a fine skin, each hair alternating with

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dark and light areas, so that in a fine skin the whole fur has the appearance of being silver gray. The black fox is simply a very dark silver gray, and is pure black only in very fine skins. The blue fox is a very rare one, now, and without doubt another variety,—perhaps a cross between a white and a red fox."

"And the white fox?" asked Freddie.

"Well, some naturalists try to make that a distinct species, and others hold that centuries of living in the Arctic regions has changed its fur and dwarfed its size, and that it is nothing but a variety of the common red fox, after all."

"I wish we might catch a white fox alive!" said Freddie. "We could then start up quite a menagerie."

"Or a young red fox!" said Allie. "My! how they would fight with the kittens."

"On one of our trips," said Mr. Taylor, "we had two young foxes on board, and they were sharp and cunning enough. We had quite a menagerie that trip. There were two young foxes, four young dogs, a puffin, three gulls: — That's all, I believe, but they kept up more racket than if there had been twice as many. Oh, yes!" said Mr. Taylor, "and one large, full-grown dog besides. They were all over the deck, and somebody was playing with or feeding them all the time."

"That must have been splendid!"

"You would have thought so," laughed Mr. Taylor, "if you had seen how mad the captain was at the way the deck was cluttered up," and he laughed again at the recollection.

By this time they had reached the house, and in a few moments the tired hunters had all sought their bunks for the night. About midnight the rain began to fall

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again; and it rained steadily and heavily all the rest of the night and the next day.

Sunday morning Mr. Benton conducted a little service in the house, and in the afternoon they amused themselves with their books, of which they had a goodly number, and thus the day passed, and night came, while the rain still continued to fall in torrents until far into the night, only clearing up just before morning.

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CHAPTER X.

FISHING FOR COD.

IT was three o'clock Monday morning, when Mr. Ready called the men, and bade them prepare to try for codfish; in a few minutes they were all down and eating their breakfast of hard bread, salt-beef, and hot tea. Max had left the stove full of wood ready to light, and the kettle full of water and tea ready to be made, so that there was really very little to do save to start the fire, and wait until the kettle boiled.

When breakfast was completed, the men placed in each boat a small tea-pot, a few sticks of wood to make a fire with, and in the locker a small keg of water and a quantity of bread and beef. This was to constitute their daily ration. They were to row to the fishing-grounds, though in this case they had first to find where these were, fish until they were hungry, then make a little fire on the heap of stones in the central partition of the boat, boil the kettle, make their tea, and eat their meal. A very small box or bottle of sugar or molasses was also carried to sweeten the tea with. It was found that the men, almost without exception, preferred molasses. They would often pour a small quantity into the bottom of their pot before starting out, and then putting in their water heat the two together. They made their tea by heating the water until it boiled, then putting in their tea and removing the pot from the fire, letting it steep

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before drinking for a few seconds only. In this way they extracted all the flavor of the tea and none of the bitter tannin of its chemical constituents.

After providing for their meal in this manner, they put their lines, hooks, and sinkers in the boats, and stowed away their oil clothes in the lockers, in case of rainy or foggy weather, and then started off to find bait.

This is the first business of the fisherman: to find his bait. This consists of two species of small fish — the caperling and the lance. The lance are long, slim fish, and found late in the season. The caperling, much like our smelts, come earlier; and it was these for which the men now went to look. If they could once find where they were, there would doubtless be a supply of bait for the season, as these fish seldom go far away from their feeding-grounds in shoal water.

"Well!" said Mr. Cooper, as they got into their boats and pushed off; "now for a hunt for bait! Keep a sharp lookout ahead, there!"

"Aye, aye!" shouted the seaman, who was sitting in the stern of the boat with a large-handled dip-net near him. "We will get them if there are any here to get; be sure of that."

The boats then began to row about the rocks and channels of the bay, searching here and there for the caperling, but all in vain.

"They must be around here, somewhere!" said Mr. Cooper, "if we can only find them. If we find the bait, and find fishing-grounds the first day, we shall do well; but if we can load the boats, too, we shall do better."

"We ought to be able to do that, sir!" said one of the men.

"A pound of smoking tobacco to the man who first

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finds bait!" sung out the mate, as they were approaching a cleared space just inside the point of land that separated the bay from the waters of the gulf outside.

"Then it's mine, sir!" cried the man at the stern, with the net. "Hold water!" and he plunged in his net and brought it out full of fish, which he emptied in the boat. Plunge succeeded plunge, as the boat followed the school about from place to place, until they had secured bait enough to supply all hands for the remainder of the day.

"There! now that we know where to find bait when we want it," said Mr. Cooper, "one point is settled satisfactorily. Now let's see if we can find the fish to catch."

While he had been speaking they had gradually approached the other boats; then they divided the bait equally among them all, and were soon off again.

"A pound of smoking tobacco!" shouted Mr. Cooper, "to the man who finds the best fishing-grounds."

The boat that contained Mr. Ready and the boys began immediately to separate from the others, and to pull for the position where the boys had found their fish on the day they had secured so many; the other boats pulled in different directions, and soon each was separated from the other.

The signal for finding fish was to be the holding up of a hat, on the end of an oar-blade, until the other boats saw it. The test of the best fishing-ground was to be the boat that loaded and started for home full first.

The boys' boat soon reached the place for which it had aimed, being easily located, and not far distant from the shore, and almost before the line had touched the bottom Freddie had got a bite and succeeded in hauling in a good-sized five-pounder, — the first fish caught. The hat

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was soon waving to and fro on the end of the oar, and a hearty response, in the shape of a great waving of hats, came from the other boats, to show that they saw the signal. Then began the sport. Allie, Freddie, and Mr. Ready were together, and they had all they could do to tend to their lines, the fish bit so voraciously.

Mr. Ready soon threw out a second line, so that he fished from one side of the boat with two lines, which he hauled in, alternately, as fast as he could, and each time with a fish on the end of it; the boys, with a line each, fished from the opposite side, and drew in the fish there, equally fast.

As none of the other boats had raised any signal, as yet, the boys were unable to tell if they had found any fish. Both of the other boats were now at least half a mile away. The boys kept on fishing, therefore, in silence, for some time, until Allie hooked an immense fellow on his line, and it took all his strength to haul the line. Mr. Ready came to his aid, however, and with much difficulty they landed a huge fellow that must have weighed at least fifty pounds.

The boys were now so tired that they sat down, leaving their lines out, to rest and eat a cracker, while Mr. Ready continued to manage all four lines, hauling each in, and jerking off the fish and rebaiting and throwing each over again, in less than no time. While the boys were resting, Mr. Ready caught no less than twenty fish.

After eating their crackers, the boys each put on a pair of old, thick gloves, with the fingers cut off to the first joint, to protect their hands, which were getting cut up and swollen already, and began fishing again.

"I don't believe that the other boats are catching anything!" remarked Mr. Ready. "I think they are in deep

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water. 'Tis early in the season yet, and the fish are in shoal water. This seems to be a sort of bank. My line touches bottom at twelve fathoms. I don't see how we caught that big, deep-water fish; the big fish usually drive away the small ones, but there seem to be as many here now as ever."

"I guess he was turning over the rocks with his nose, to find food for the little ones," laughed Freddie.

"At any rate, we've turned his nose over for him!" said Allie, looking at the big fellow lying in the bottom of the boat, and occasionally flapping about in a most vigorous manner.

While the boys were having such luck, the other boats were wandering about, here and there, searching, but so far, without success, for a good place to fish. As yet they had not captured a single one.

"I declare! it's a shame for them to have all the luck," said Mr. Cooper. "I believe that they are catching fish on the same ground where the boys caught theirs, the day we cleaned the wreck out."

"No doubt of it!" said one of the men. "We'd better go nearer to them or between them and the shore, if we want to have any luck."

"That's a good suggestion!" replied the mate, and immediately he drew up the grapnel, and taking the oars pulled to a position between the other boat and the shore, and throwing down the iron again over went the lines.

They had evidently struck the fish; for no sooner were the lines to the bottom than the fish began to bite, and then the sport began.

"We will not put up any signal!" said the mate, "we haven't got time to attend to signals, unless we want the boys and a land lubber" — for so he styled Mr. Ready,

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because he was not a regular seaman — "to over-haul us and carry in the first boat load. Double lines out, Mr. Stebbins; I guess we can manage two lines apiece."

In a minute another line was set over each side of the boat, and the experienced fishermen put in all they knew to beat the boat containing Mr. Ready and the boys; but the latter was smaller than the former, and yet the big boat filled up fast under experienced hands and fresh ones, while the lines of the other grew heavier and heavier, as the work progressed.

Of the third boat, containing the rest of the men, nothing had as yet been heard. She seemed to have given up the search while her men went to sleep, — no one seemed to be moving. Such was, in fact, the case; not finding any fish, the men had rowed out as far as they dared, hove the grapnel overboard, and were soon well curled up finishing their morning's nap.

"About ten o'clock, by the sun!" said Mr. Ready, "let's have something to eat. Come, make a fire, somebody!"

The boys gladly assented, and Fred at once took out his jack-knife and began whittling some shavings from a piece of yellow-pine stick, which had been carefully preserved in the locker for this very purpose. To these he added some of the smaller, then one or two larger sticks, and lighting the pile suspended the kettle over the fire by fastening it to the halliard, and keeping it away from the mast by placing a stick of wood between them. When the kettle boiled, the tea was made, and the corned-beef and other provisions brought out. Mr. Ready had stowed away a little better food than the men had taken, and now all hands helped themselves and fully enjoyed it.

"My-e-e!" exclaimed Fred; "doesn't that bread and

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butter taste nice. This tea isn't hot a bit, and here I've been blowing it for nearly a minute, thinking that it would scorch me if I touched it."

"A fisherman eating apple-sauce!" said Allie; "I think that's pretty rich;" and he helped himself liberally from a mustard-box full, that Eva, the night before, had told Max to put in Fred's basket.

"I don't believe the other boats have got a fish yet!" laughed Mr. Ready; "I guess they've gone to sleep in them."

So Mr. Ready and the boys finished their meal, hauled up their lines and took the fish off and rebaited and threw them over again, and they, too, lay down and took a nap.

An hour later they woke up and went to fishing again.

That hour allowed the mate and Mr. Stebbins to get the lead, and about two o'clock the boats started for home, both loaded to the top. The men in the other boat were just making a fire, as could be seen by the smoke, and as the two full boats moved off the other took their place on the same ground, and the crew began to fish in real earnest.

About half an hour's rowing brought the loaded boats to the wharf, and the men rushed to Max for a more substantial dinner than cold corned-beef and hardtack, while Mr. Ready and the boys took upon themselves the task of pitching the fish out of the boats into the trough above.

It took them until the men returned to empty the first boat, and then the men took hold and soon emptied the second one, and began to clean them. Two hours later, and nearly twenty quintals of fish were stowed away,

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and the boats had started off for another load, while the other boat was just returning with its first load.

"I think this is great fun!" said Fred. "I'm only afraid that I shall get tired out before the season ends, if I have to get up at three o'clock every morning."

"Oh, you'll get hardened to that after a spell!" laughed Mr. Ready, "the same as I did."

"Why! did you ever belong to a fishery?" asked Allie.

"Bless your heart!" remarked Mr. Ready, "I learned the trade from a regular rascal, when I was a small boy, and had to work at it, whether I liked it or not; then I had the fishery on the island until I sold out."

Mr. Ready always used the word *I*, when talking about the "establishment on the island," although it was afterwards learned that he and another man had gone into partnership, the other man supplying all the money, and they had failed and been obliged to sell out.

"Well, boys, here we are again!" and Mr. Ready threw out the grappling-iron, and then proceeded to draw out the lines.

At that moment, a huge hagden flitted by and picked up a dead caperling, that was floating on the water only a few rods in the rear of the boat.

"How I wish I had brought my gun!" exclaimed Freddie. "See, there!"

And he pointed to a long, black line on the horizon.

"It's a flock of ducks," said Allie, "probably the last of the season before they divide up and go to breeding."

It was without doubt an immense flock of eiders, and the boys watched them for some minutes.

"Come, come!" said Mr. Ready, rather impatiently, but still good-naturedly, "this isn't fishing."

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A few moments more, and they were hauling in the fish as rapidly as they had been during the morning, both boats occupying very nearly the same relative position they had then held. It was evident that the men in both had "taken bearings."

At nine o'clock at night, five hungry and tired men, and two hungry and tired boys, the latter almost too tired to be hungry, reached the wharf with two and a half loads of fish still to be cured before going to bed.

A good warm supper and hot tea were served, and then they went to the wharf again to cure their fish.

"A pretty good day's work!" remarked Mr. Cooper, rubbing hands with satisfaction, though he was not generally very demonstrative. "A pretty good day's work; about fifty quintals. We'll never do much better, and may do a great deal worse."

"If we can keep this up!" said Mr. Ready, with a very serious, comical smile, "we'll have our barn full by the end of the season; *then* what are we going to do with them?"

"Tut, tut!" remarked Mr. Cooper. "Never borrow trouble! you're sure to have enough without it."

"Very true! but what do you suppose it will be best to do in case we don't find a vessel?"

"Oh, but we shall!" and Mr. Cooper nodded his head very significantly, and remarked: "or we'll take a boat and hunt around till we find one. We could sail to Newfoundland in a day, if we had good wind and fair sky."

"I suppose so!" remarked Mr. Ready; "but I'd a great deal rather that you'd go than I!"

"And I'd rather go than send you," laughed the mate. "I'd be more sure of finding something."

"If *you* went for it, *I* shouldn't be likely to be the

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one to find it, that's true!" returned Mr. Ready, with a laugh. "With what the boys got the other day, we've got a good fifty quintals, sure;" he added more soberly. "I think our day's work a great success, and I'll take the tobacco, for the first fish, if you please, Mr. Cooper."

"I think I'll keep it for getting in with the first load," replied Mr. Cooper, good-naturedly.

"Hum!" said Mr. Ready, energetically, taking off his coat with a great flourish, meanwhile; "we must halve it, or fight for it."

"Oh, I'll give you half," laughed Mr. Cooper.

"Ah, hum! that is *all* we want," remarked the former; "*all* we *want!*" emphasizing both the all and the want.

Mr. Ready was soon filling his pipe with some of the "*all* we *want*," and smoking as peacefully as if he had been at it all the day and intended following it as an occupation all night and possibly for the remainder of his life.

Mr. Benton was at the door, although it was late, when Mr. Cooper went to retire. His brow was somewhat clouded, and he could hardly put the question he seemed desirous of asking.

Mr. Cooper noticed the anxiety, but, as if he had not noticed it, remarked quickly:

"Bait and fish plenty, sir! We'll have a full cargo, sir!"

"That's the best news I've heard yet!" said Mr. Benton, slapping Mr. Cooper on the shoulder. "You relieve me from a terrible suspense and anxiety. It will be easier to find a vessel to take our cargo home — or even to send it abroad — than to find a cargo for our vessel — other than ourselves."

"I think we can clear one thousand quintals before the end of the fishery, sir. We have taken fully fifty, so far, and the fish seem as abundant as ever."

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"Praise the Lord!" remarked Mr. Benton. "If there is anything among the stores, Mr. Cooper, that you would like, either for yourself, or for the men, — anything within reason, you know, — help yourself freely," remarked Mr. Benton, as he turned and entered his room.

Shortly after this all had retired for the night, and Mr. Ready, the last to turn in, carefully taking his pipe out of his mouth, and knocking the inverted bowl two or three times on a stick of wood, as he emptied the ashes out, remarked to himself as he pocketed the same and made his way up the ladder to his bunk:

"Old times, once more! seems natural! Prospects good! — yes, *very* good! I think we may be *perfectly* satisfied, *so far!*"

The next day "the crew" were off again to the fishing-grounds, John remaining at home with Mr. Taylor.

The latter had taken the hides from off the two mountain cats, and stretching them inside out, upon the two sticks which he had made for them, had placed them carefully upon the roof of the house to dry in the sun, taking pains to turn them over and over, several times, during the course of the day. The carcasses he dissected, cleaned thoroughly, and boiled the flesh, carefully taken from the bones, into an excellent soup, which the men ate with evident relish.

Mr. Taylor himself and the others merely tasted of it. The bones were carefully preserved, scraped of all their flesh, dried, done up in parcels, labelled, and put away.

"We will mount them some day, perhaps," said Mr. Taylor.

Eva, all this time, had been trying to tame the young kittens; but they sorely missed their mother. She tried them first with a spoonful of condensed milk weak-

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ened in cold water, then she tried it in warm; then she put bread into both, and finally tried scraps of meat, but they refused to eat. At length, one day, moved by a sudden impulse, she threw a bone of a duck into their box. Immediately each grabbed an end of it and began to fight for the possession of the whole bone. She threw them more pieces, and soon had the pleasure of seeing them eating heartily, and eventually, save for an occasional side glance at each other, or a growl, or a spit, as if to assert their rights to the pieces thrown to them in defiance of the other; the grand act had been accomplished, and they had eaten. Henceforth they were fed easily, and would soon eat almost anything that was thrown to them in the shape of meat, though they would drink nothing save water.

Eva was delighted with her pets. They "acted so like little geese!" she said. — "They'll fight nothing for hours, and when I go to them and box their ears, they back way up into the corner and seem frightened half to death. They are getting tamer and tamer every day, and I can almost pet them and take them up in my lap."

"If you succeed in taming those young animals," said Mr. Taylor, "you'll do more than many another person who has tried before you! It is one of the hardest of animals to tame known."

"I don't care one bit!" exclaimed Eva, "Popsy and Topsy are the nicest little things in the world; an't you, Popsy and Topsy?"

By way of reply, Popsy and Topsy began to spit and to hiss, and to retreat into the corner of the room, beneath one of the chairs, to which they were fastened.

Eva applied a small switch vigorously upon them, which made them fight all the more, as she said:

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"There! by and by I shall get you two naughty children tamed down, so that you will really behave yourselves when you are told to;" and she applied the switch more vigorously.

"When you get those two animals 'tamed down' with that mode of procedure;" laughed Mr. Taylor, "I hope you will let me know;" and he fairly shook with suppressed laughter.

Eva ran up behind him and gave him a good box upon the ear, with the remark that she'd tame him if he laughed at either her or her pets, and Mr. Taylor ducked his head and ignominiously rushed for another corner of the room.

"I don't know which is the worst," said Eva, "two unruly animals or an unruly man."

Peace being at length restored, John began to recite his Geometry lesson to Mr. Taylor. John was studying to take the prize entrance examination to college, and could think of little else just now. He was anxious to excel his friend, at home, Peter Marvin, who was, perhaps, one of the smartest students in the town. Mr. Taylor had agreed that if he followed his advice and instructions he would "come as near giving him the prize as he could." This was almost equivalent to saying that he could guarantee him the prize, for Mr. Taylor was regarded as a very fine scholar and teacher, and so John was spending all his time studying, forgetful of the motto that much study is a "weariness to the flesh." John was not, therefore, much of a companion for the other boys; for his mind was too often upon the Greek roots, while theirs was vigorous and healthy in the performance of those daily duties which in the end develop manhood more than the confined study even of Greek.

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Mrs. Benton was not idle these days. As the only lady of the establishment, she superintended the general household work with a care and decision that showed that she had not entirely forgotten the training of her earlier days.

"The house is small and cramped with so many in it," she would say, "and it don't take a great while to go from one end of it to the othor, yet you can walk miles here just as well as you can out of doors."

And the good woman illustrated her words by trotting about continually, now here and now there, attending to this thing and that, and even mending the clothes, and proving a real "mother in Israel," as Mr. Taylor remarked. And it took time to wash, iron, and mend the boys' and men's clothes.

"The others must look out for themselves, but Mr. Benton, Mr. Taylor, and the boys must have their things attended to, and as no one else can do it, Max and *I* will!" said the good woman.

Mr. Benton, also, did little these days, save to rest and walk. He was a fine business man, but was now "like a cat in a strange garret;" and so he spent most of the time in reading, walking, sleeping, and eating. He did not eat a great deal, but he slept continually, or appeared to. He walked out several times daily, and generally to the top of the hill, above the house, — being apparently never tired of viewing the beauties of the scenery, and watching for vessels or boats, he would say. He often saw the smoke of large steamers, far off in the distance; and once he saw the steamer itself, almost near enough to hail it. From this he felt sure that they could not be far out of the way of vessels, — yet none came near enough to see them.

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Mr. Benton was excessively fond of reading. He was always supplied with an immense amount of reading matter, in the shape of the latest novels of all kinds. He would start on one of them, let everything, even his meals and nap, go, to pursue the hero or heroine to the end; and, when reached, throw the book down with a disgusted air, and remark:

"Trash! perfect nonsense! Worse than useless to write such stuff. *I* shall never allow *my* boys to read novels; it wastes more time, and is more injurious than any other employment that I know of. *I* am never going to read another of the trashy things."

Half an hour later, he would be perusing the table of contents of a new story with the remark:

"They're all just about the same! Nonsense! absolute nonsense! and a positive imposition upon society!"

The family were past remonstrating, as Mr. Benton always retorted:

"I only want to see if there *is* a decent one among them. I haven't found it yet, but I *may!* I *may!*"

As for Mr. Taylor, he could no more resist an appeal to go trouting, than he could resist the daily course of the sun; while Eva was never so happy as when, with paper and scissors in hand, she was clipping and pasting in her scrap-book such pieces as seemed best to suit her fancy. Her book had contained four divisions, primarily: of poetry, stories, small scraps, and items; but she had gradually filled up the pages so that now it was one continuous scrap-book, with everything mixed together, — excepting the last dozen pages, which were as yet unfilled.

Thus the family spent their time, and thus time hurried on "apace," while everything seemed to prosper.

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CHAPTER XI.

CAST AWAY UPON AN ISLAND.

"HURRY in with that painter there, boys, double quick time, now!" cried Mr. Ready, trying vainly to catch the end of the halliard, which was dodging about here and there in the air, blown by the wind. "Lively, there! we shall get blown overboard if we don't hurry and get to the lee of the land."

Fred and Allie exerted their utmost to haul in the grapnel, while Mr. Ready caught the halliard, and hoisting the sail, put the tiller hard-up and headed the boat for home.

They had been out on the ground since morning,—'twas now about nine o'clock, and the boat was not yet half-full. It had been clear when they started out, but gradually the clouds had overcast the sky, and now the wind began to freshen so perceptibly that Mr. Ready evidently began to be somewhat alarmed.

Away they fairly hummed through the water, as the waves increased and the wind whistled through the rigging. The little boat jumped as if she were a rocking-horse, and the spray dashing over the gunwale, wet both Mr. Ready and the boys.

The *Sprite seemed* to be making very good progress; but in reality it scarcely held its own, for both wind and tide were against it, and though they continued to beat about for over an hour, they scarcely gained a dozen

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rods. As time passed, the wind slightly, yet perceptibly, freshened, and at last Mr. Ready exclaimed:

"It's very plain to me, that if we want to get anywhere to-day we must turn and scud for that little island, over there, and stay till the wind changes!"

Suiting the action to the word, he put the tiller hard-up, again, and in a moment more the boat touched land.

All clambered out upon the beach, and soon fastened the painter to a large stone, deeply imbedded in the sand, one end of which was sharp and pointed, so that there was no danger of the rope slipping when passed around it; the boat itself was drawn up a good distance on the beach, before the painter had been tied, — then the boys ran off quickly to see what sort of a place they had landed upon.

It was a long, narrow, flat island, with a wide beach of sand and small stones, and higher up a large central patch of green grasses and low vegetation. Toward the sea at one end of the island was a little hill, perhaps fifty feet high, sloping toward the island, almost perpendicular at the seaward side, and forming a sheltered nook at the side where the precipitous sides came around to join the slope; it was a most cozy corner.

Here the boys at once established themselves, and began making preparations to build a fire by collecting several armfuls of the driftwood, which was scattered abundantly about the beach. In a few minutes they had brought together a quantity of these pieces and had started a blaze. The pieces were laid slanting, with their tops near together, — so that the pile looked like a Mountain Indian's wigwam, or *mishwap*, as the Labrador Indians call their huts. Then larger sticks were added,

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until soon the pile was nearly two feet in diameter at the base, and as high, and burning away furiously, sending up a long, heavy column of smoke from the top, while the sides were bursting with flames in all directions and sending out its heat and glow for a circle of nearly a rod around it.

"This *is* comfortable!" exclaimed Mr. Ready, sitting down on a small stone near the fire, and alternately holding out and rubbing together his hands. "Now, you boys can run and take a look around the island, if you wish, while I stay and keep the fire —"

"Warm!" shouted Freddie, as he darted off toward the other side of the island.

"Yes, warm!" replied Mr. Ready, laughing, "keep the fire warm. I guess that 'tis pretty near time to get something substantial to eat," he added to himself, as the boys were hurrying over the slope. So he exclaimed aloud: "Hurry back soon, boys, and we'll have something to eat!"

Mr. Ready then went to the boat and brought out the paper of lunch, the coffee-pot, and a small box each of sugar and coffee; then selecting carefully a large, fine codfish, he hurried with them all to the fire, and deposited them on a rock close by. Then he took the fish and, going to the edge of the water, cut it open and cleaned it, at the same time giving it a good washing. The fish, being thoroughly cleaned, he laid upon the rock, and going along the beach until he had found a good-sized, flat, thin stone, he took it, scrubbed off the surface and brought it near the fire to dry. He then placed the stone, propped up by another stone, as near the fire as he thought necessary for his purpose, and putting a piece of the brown paper in which the luncheon was

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tied upon the surface of the stone, he carefully laid the fish upon it, with the skin towards the fire.

"There!" exclaimed Mr. Ready, when all this had been accomplished, "now, cook, will ye!"

And he sat down on the stone again to watch the fire.

"Bother take it! I do believe I'm getting to know less and less every day."

And Mr. Ready jumped up, and began poking the fire in front of the fish until the place presented a glowing mass of coals, instead of smoke and flames alone.

"Well!" he added, "I can turn both the stone and the fish over, if I find that the bottom is getting cooked faster than the top."

When the fish and stone had been arranged to his satisfaction, Mr. Ready went to the boat, filled the pot with water, and returning, isolated a few coals from the fire, poking them between two stones, upon which he placed the pot, with some coffee in it, and sat down to watch that also.

"I declare, that fish is scorching!" said Mr. Ready.

Immediately he jumped up and proceeded to turn the fish, as best he could, it being somewhat hot.

"There! Now I'll try to sit down a moment, for a third time."

Just then he heard a sizzling noise behind him, and turning around perceived that the coffee-pot had slipped and spilt over nearly one-third of the water and put the fire out beneath it.

"I declare! what a peck of trouble!" he exclaimed, as he proceeded to right the pot, drop in a small quantity more of coffee, and put new coals under the stones, upon which he re-set the pot, but much more securely than before.

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Then the fish needed turning again. All these things occupied time, and kept Mr. Ready very busy. While he was at work with the lunch, we will see what the boys were doing.

When they left Mr. Ready, with the parting injunction to "be back soon," they ascended the low beach and passing over its ridge, came at once to the patch of grass and scant vegetation composing the center of the island. As they proceeded a number of gulls and ducks flew up and away, the former hovering about, some distance overhead, uttering hoarse croaks of remonstrance as the boys pounced eagerly upon several nests and secured the eggs, in Allie's hat.

"Ten duck's eggs from two nests, and seven gull's eggs from three nests!" exclaimed Fred.

"I guess they must be all good!" said Allie, "they look fresh."

While the boys were walking and talking they almost stumbled upon a large nest of down, in the center of which were cozily imbedded five downy young ducks, from which the mother had just flown, leaving them to their fate — while she protected herself by flight. They were beauties; but the boys would not touch them, being even more generous than their truant mother. A little further on they came upon a gull's nest, in which also were several young birds. As they approached the sea, on the other side of the island, a large flock of sandpeeps flew off in a tremendous fright and hurry — while a single, solitary *nan-sary* (or yellow legs) whirred away with a shrill call that startled another small flock of beach birds from a small cove behind a huge rock not far away from them.

"What luck we have had this morning, Allie."

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"I think so, too; but see those things in the water!"

Allie crouched low, and pulled Fred down with him; then they both cautiously peered over the top of a rock near by and watched. It was an old duck with a flock of little ones around her.

"I declare!" exclaimed Fred, "if she isn't holding them on her back."

The young ducks were, in fact, clustered about, and apparently resting on the back of the old bird, whose body was almost submerged, showing scarcely more than the head above water. After a moment the young ducks slipped off and went paddling about the old duck, who seemed to be directing their motions. Two or three times, while thus engaged, the boys thought they heard some one calling; but the wind was blowing so loud that they could hardly tell, while Fred insisted that it was a big gull up in the air that was "sassing" them for taking away their eggs.

At length, tired of watching the young ducks and their mother, they rose from their place of concealment and hastened toward the boat. As they appeared in sight, Mr. Ready's voice greeted them.

"Where have you been to? I've been a hollering for yer for the last ten minutes. Why didn't you come? The coffee's hot, and the fish cooked, and everything ready."

"So are the eggs!" laughed Fred, producing Allie's hat full.

At the sound of eggs, of which Mr. Ready was very fond, he jumped up, ran to the boat, and soon returned with the tin bailing bucket.

"There!" he said, as he filled it with water, and proceeded to hunt up a rude forked stick, the forks of which sharpened he pushed through the holes in the opposite

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sides of the can: "Now we will have something worth eating!"

When filled with eggs, resting the edge on stones, and holding the stick, he was able to boil the eggs without any difficulty. The ten duck's eggs were boiled first, and five of the gull's eggs put in and left to boil hard, while they all proceeded to business.

"Two eggs, a large piece of codfish, two corned-beef sandwiches, two doughnuts and a piece of cheese, two small pieces of cake —"

"And two cups of coffee, apiece!" exclaimed Mr. Ready, laughing, and interrupting Fred as he was thus enumerating the various articles of the meal.

"Yes! apiece!" exclaimed Fred, indignantly. "That's a pretty dinner for three big men. I think that they might at least have put in a pickle."

Allie and Mr. Ready fairly choked themselves laughing at this addition, while protesting against the apparent smallness of the amount.

"Bless you, child!" laughed Mr. Ready, recovering himself, "dip your head in salt-water, or take a mouthful of it, that's pickle enough for anybody. *I'm* very well contented, indeed," and he proceeded to swallow his portion with all possible gusto.

"Well, I suppose I am satisfied!" replied Fred, very humbly, "but I do wish I had a pickle."

"Fall into the water, Fred!" said Allie, "and you'll get into one fast enough."

"Humph!" replied Freddie; "I'd rather one would get into me; I'm in a pickle enough now, without getting into any more."

"Come, be sensible!" cried his brother; "what do you need a pickle for?"

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Just then a big gull sailed over them and uttered a hoarse chuckle, as much as to say: "What are you doing here?"

"I'd pickle him!" said Allie, "if I had a gun."

"Come, eat your dinner, 'tis all you'll get for awhile now, if this wind keeps on. Wind in the middle of the day is a bad thing now, depend upon it."

The boys went diligently to work at the provisions, and very successfully, judging from the scraps remaining half an hour later.

As there was nothing else to do, after satisfying their appetite, the boys replenished the fire, and huddled closely up to it, and were soon dozing and nodding their heads; but even here Mr. Ready was before them. Sailor-like, being able to sleep at almost any time and place, he had rolled himself up as near the fire as he could, and was fairly snoring before the others had got any farther than to simply nod and yawn, — but very soon they, too, gave up to the charm of the situation, and there they all lay, quietly and soundly sleeping off the effects of their bountiful dinner.

Mr. Ready, sailor-like, again, did not sleep long; but, after about half an hour, awoke and rolled over as easily as he had fallen asleep. His first care was to replenish the fire, and then, seeing that all was safe, and the boys sleeping soundly and not near enough to the fire to get burned, he rolled himself up again for another nap.

While the boys and Mr. Ready were quietly sleeping, an event of great importance was happening near by. All this while the tide was slowly but surely rising. It had been impossible to draw the boat, heavily loaded as it was with nearly half a ton of fish, far up the gravelly

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beach, and it did not require long for the water to reach the place to which Mr. Ready and the boys had drawn it. Soon, therefore, the boat began to bob up and down at the stern, as the rolling waves hurried to throw themselves upon the beach. Little by little the water arose, higher and higher, until very soon the boat actually floated on the in wave, and came back with a tug at the painter on the out wave. All this was nothing at first, but very soon the rope began to loosen its hold upon the rock, and, little by little, to give way, — until, finally, the painter jerked entirely free — and the boat itself was bobbing about on the waves, several rods from the shore, and slowly, yet surely drifting to the leeward end of the island, pounding rocks and occasionally the gravelly beach as it traveled, as if in protest at its final fate. An hour or so later Mr. Ready and the boys awoke, all much refreshed from their nap.

"Two o'clock, and all as smooth and comfortable as if it hadn't been blowing for the last three hours!" exclaimed Mr. Ready. "Wind gone down, sky clearing; sea as rough as ever; in an hour or so I guess we can go on with our fishing!"

The boys jumped up, rubbed their eyes, yawned, and then set to work replenishing the fire, which was soon burning away as briskly as ever.

Fred then took up his tin cup and approached the coffee-pot for a drink, when, upon turning the pot, not a drop ran out of the muzzle; opening the lid he saw that it had been emptied dry.

"Put some more water in it!" said Mr. Ready, "there's plenty more in the keg in the boat."

Freddie started off with the coffee-pot in his hand, but soon returned and inquired with open eyes:

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"Where *is* the boat?"

"Ye must be blind or asleep if ye can't find the boat!" remarked Mr. Ready, in a rather petulant voice, as he arose and proceeded to show the boys where the boat was.

"Hum!" exclaimed that worthy gentleman, as he stood upon the crest of the slope and looked here and there in search of the boat. "Hum! yes! exactly so, how much!" were the ejaculations which Mr. Ready uttered.

"Now who's asleep!" queried Freddie.

"I guess we've all been," replied that gentleman, straining his eyes in search of any sight of the boat on the surrounding waters.

A climb up the hill and an outlook from this point served no better — no boat was in sight. Once clear of the island, the wind and waves had hurried it fast to sea.

"Well! we've got two boats and a dory left, anyway," said Mr. Ready; "we must stick up some sort of a signal. I think they can see us."

Suiting the action to the word, he returned to the shore, sought out a long stick, which he found after searching over nearly the whole island, and, fastening to the end a large red bandana, which he carried with him in his pocket, he planted it firmly on the rocks, on the top of the hill, and piled a lot of stones around it to hold it up.

"There, I guess they'll see that!" remarked Mr. Ready, as he descended the hill again. "Now we must wait results, and perhaps stay here over night."

"I don't care if we do," said Allie, "if it isn't too cold and it don't rain."

"And it *may* do both," laughed Mr. Ready. "You

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boys had better collect all the wood you can, first. We won't starve as long as we can find eggs;" and Mr. Ready accidentally stepped on the nest of a duck and broke three of the eggs.

The boys laughed as they went to gather up the drift-wood, and Mr. Ready remained and hunted for eggs while they were thus engaged. He soon collected a hat-ful, and then joined the boys around the fire.

"We have got the tin bailer, plenty of water, plenty of fire, and plenty of eggs if we have to stay here to-night, for one supper, anyway."

"And I've got a fish-line and several hooks, but no bait," remarked Allie. "I am going to try my luck on that big stone there,—it looks deep beyond, and we might catch some tomcods."

Allie produced the fish-line and hooks from his pocket, and soon had them rigged for his purpose. He found the head of the cod they had eaten for dinner, from which he got bait, and was soon with hook and line in the water waiting results.

"Don't bite very fast, do they?" asked Mr. Ready, half an hour later, noticing Allie still perched upon the rock with his line in the water.

"I've had just one bite," said Allie, "and I think that that was either a stone or a lobster."

"I wonder where Fred is?" asked Mr. Ready; "I haven't seen him since you began to fish."

About half an hour later Fred came along with his hatful of sea shells. They were a large whitish shell, almost two inches long and an inch in diameter, and every one had a live animal in it.

"What *are* you going to do with these things?" asked Mr. Ready, in great disgust.

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"Why, I'm going to eat them for my supper," said Freddie, "they're splendid eating; didn't you ever try them?"

"I'm sure I never did," said Mr. Ready, "how do you eat them; you don't eat them raw, do you?"

"Well, no!" replied Fred, disgusted in his turn, "you first extract the animal, then fill the shell with sand, stop it up with seaweeds, fry them in pork scraps, and eat them with cream," said Fred, laughing, "the liver furnishes first-rate material for the teeth. But really the trouble is, I've got to boil them in salt water, — or dig a hole in the sand, roll them up in seaweed, and cook them with the fire on top, Indian style. I guess I'll boil them," he remarked, after a short pause.

Just then Allie got a bite, and, to the delight of all, hauled in a fine lobster.

"What can we do with him, now we have got him?" asked Mr. Ready. "We can't boil him in salt water, and there isn't any other way to cook him, that I know of. Guess we'd better keep him, his flesh may come in handy, some way or other. We may be glad to get so much, — though if you can get one at high tide you can get twenty-one at low tide."

"We might cook lobsters 'Indian fashion,' as Fred calls it," said Allie.

"And fish, too!" laughed Mr. Ready.

"I don't care!" maintained Fred, "I'm going to try it."

"There! I've caught something," said Allie, tugging away at his line, and drawing the object nearer and nearer. "There you are, my boy!" cried he, as he landed a fine, large flounder right in the middle of the fire.

"Pull him out there, Fred, quick!"

Fred pulled him out, and exclaimed at the same time

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as to what a fine mess of things they had for their Indian bake.

"You don't try any experiments with that flounder," laughed Allie. "If we have to stay here all night, as is too likely, we want at least *one* good thing for supper."

"Now *I'm* going off to see what *I* can find," laughed Mr. Ready, as he trudged off towards the top of the rock, with the coffee-pot in one hand and his tin mug in the other.

Fred now began transferring the fire, stick by stick, to a convenient place several feet distant from where it then was. Then with a broad stick he dug away the sand and glowing embers remaining, until he had made quite a deep and wide hole. Into this he put a quantity of damp seaweed, then his lobster and shells carefully upon the mass, upon this he packed more seaweed, and finally scraped the sand and embers back again upon the pile.

"There, now, stay there until you are cool!" said Fred. "What, another!" he exclaimed, as Allie landed his second flounder, one almost as big as the first.

"Another what!" sounded Mr. Ready's voice, close by; then Mr. Ready appeared, holding the coffee-pot in one hand, just the same as when he had left, and the tin cup in the other.

"Another cup of coffee, if you please," laughed Fred.

"Certainly, if you'll only wait until supper-time."

"Where's the water coming from?" asked Fred.

"From the clouds of heaven," said Mr. Ready.

"Must be pretty funny weather where you have been," remarked Allie, "to fill your pot so quick!"

"Didn't you see that pool of water in the hollow of the rocks on the top of the hill, when we were fixing

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the signal?" asked Mr. Ready. "There's good water for you there, and plenty of it."

"*I* think this is ever so much more like getting cast away than anything else that we have had," said Fred. "Lucky we saved the coffee; what is that big paper next to the rock?" he asked.

"I declare!" remarked Mr. Ready, "if that isn't the package of hardtack we took with us; I forgot all about it."

"Cold day when we get left, hoop'er up for number three!" sung out Allie, pulling in his third fish, "but I'm going to stop fishing; we've got enough to eat, 'tis getting dark, and I'm tired,—been fishing nearly two hours and caught three fish. It's too 'few and far between.'"

"I guess the water won't come into the corner of the rocks here; let's go and get some grass and make a bed," said Mr. Ready.

Throwing, hastily, some sticks on the fire, all three ran up the bank and were soon returning with their arms full of grass.

"I think we'd better lie right on the sand," said Mr. Ready, "this grass is too wet to lie on. It will make a good pillow, anyway, with some dry seaweed over it."

"If we could get something to lie over it to keep our heads from its dampness," said Allie.

"Why not take some dry seaweed?" said Mr. Ready. "That's good enough, I'm sure."

"It's too dry and brittle," said Allie, "'twould scratch your face."

"Why, rest your head on your arm," said Mr. Ready.

"I'll bet we'll sleep fast enough, when the time comes," said Fred, who was diligently engaged in digging up his Indian bakery.

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"This is just what I call *fun*. I'd rather be here than anywhere else, just now; it's more real than anything else we've had yet, and I don't care if we stay here a week, if the coffee don't give out."

The others laughed at this. The idea of men cast away on a desert island, living on the fat of the land and drinking coffee, was too ridiculous to resist laughing at it.

Fred took no notice of them, however, but soon dug out his shells and his lobster; and having tried one of the shells, and a claw of the lobster, and pronounced them perfect, he filled up the hole again, smoothed over the sand, and then put sticks on the fire until it burned up bright and high.

It was now getting quite dark, and so Mr. Ready began to prepare the supper. He first cooked more eggs, then broiled the fish on forked sticks, though it was "the most difficult piece of work," he said, that he "ever performed, broiling a flounder on a forked stick;" but at last it was successfully accomplished. Then he boiled the coffee, and soon had everything ready.

"Ding-a-ling-a-ling-a-ling-a-ding-ding-ding-ding!" shouted Mr. Ready, at the top of his voice.

"Hooray for supper!" cried Fred, from the top of the rock, and he and Allie came tumbling down in a tremendous hurry, barking their shins terribly from several stumbles in so doing.

The supper disappeared as the dinner had done before, and only as was possible to hungry boys, excited by the situation, and the prospect of remaining out all night. The eggs, coffee, and hardtack disappeared so rapidly, and there was such an abundance of them, that Fred's lobster and shellfish were almost untouched.

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"They're awful good, just the same," said Fred, persistently; yet even he ate more of the other things than of them. After supper they all sat up and talked for nearly an hour, and then, throwing the rest of the wood on the fire, they sought the corner of the rocks and threw themselves upon their sand-beds with grass pillows, the latter by this time quite dry from being spread in front of the fire, and were soon all fast asleep.

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CHAPTER XII.

THE RESCUE AND A BIG DINNER.

"I WONDER where those boys can be!" remarked Mrs. Benton, as the family sat down to the supper-table. "I only hope that they haven't floundered!" Everybody laughed at this innocent mistake, and, after correcting herself, the good lady continued: "If they don't come pretty soon, their supper will get cold. I can't imagine what keeps them away so long."

At that moment a noise was heard at the door, and Eva hurried to open it, but found no one but Mr. Cooper there, who had come up from the wharf where he had fastened his boat.

"Come in, Mr. Cooper," exclaimed Mr. Benton from his seat. "Can you tell us anything of Mr. Ready and the boys? they have not yet arrived."

"They were with us on the fishing-ground," replied Mr. Cooper, "early in the afternoon; and when the squall struck, they were like us trying to reach the bay. We succeeded, but I imagine that the wind was worse for them than it was for us even, as they were further seaward, — and should not be greatly surprised if they had turned and scud for one of the islands outside."

"Yes," replied Mr. Benton, "that is surely very true, but that would not hinder them from returning home now the gale is over."

"I can hardly think that they would stay away with-

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out some good and sufficient reason," Mr. Cooper added.

"I do hope they haven't drowned," remarked Eva, the tears coming into her eyes in spite of her efforts to appear calm.

"They are somewhere around, and some accident has happened to them, you may depend. Mr. Ready is a good sea-dog within a safe distance of land."

"They may have gone to one of the islands, and decided to stay there over night to please the boys," remarked Mr. Cooper.

"Possibly; but I do not imagine that they would even think of such a thing while there was the least chance of those at home being really worried about them. If they were going to do anything of that kind, they would take a day for it especially, and not such a time as this; no," replied Mr. Benton, decidedly, "you may depend that some accident has happened somewhere."

"You might place a lighted lantern on the end of a pole, and raise it on the top of the hill," put in Mr. Taylor, now speaking for the first time.

"That might be easily done, and would not be a bad idea," replied the mate.

With the required authority from Mr. Benton, Mr. Cooper and Mr. Taylor started off to execute the task.

The lantern was found without much difficulty, and, in place of a suitable pole, an oar was substituted, and the two proceeded to the top of the ridge, where there was already a large pile of stones, or an "American man," as the sailors called it, piled up close to the edge of the bank, and where it would command the best view of the surrounding scenery.

"Here is the best place we could possibly find," said Mr. Taylor. "I will move these stones on the top a

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little, and I have no doubt that we can then thrust the end of the oar down into the pile sufficiently far for it to remain standing."

The lantern was then fastened to the blade of the oar, and the handle easily pushed quite a distance down in among the stones.

"There," remarked Mr. Cooper, taking hold of the handle of the oar and giving it a vigorous shake; "I guess that is firm enough to stand, for to-night at least; but what is that light over yonder?"

"Where?" demanded Mr. Taylor.

"There, over the point of those rocks."

"I see no light anywhere."

"I do not see it myself now, but I did see it."

"There it is, again; and there."

"Yes; I do see something flickering quite a distance out to sea, on our left."

"Yes, that is where I saw it," said Mr. Cooper. "Take the oar down and wave the lantern. Quick, before you lose sight of their light."

Mr. Taylor hurried down the oar and Mr. Cooper caught the lantern from the blade, and in a moment was swinging it around his head with the slow, steady motion of one used to making such signals.

"Do you see the light again? Is there an answer?"

"I see the light again, but it doesn't look like a signal, to me."

The reader will easily understand that the flickerings that they saw, were simply the brightening of the fire that the boys had made upon the island as they threw the remainder of their wood upon it before going to sleep. The flames, then, certainly could return no signal, while they, by brightening the atmosphere about

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them, prevented either the boys or Mr. Ready from seeing the lantern, which was raised only a few moments, in fact, before they had gone to sleep.

"Do you see anything?" asked the mate.

"Not a thing. I saw a flickering light once, but it has gone now. I think it must have been the light from some vessel that has now turned her bow more seaward, so that we cannot see her lights."

"But why does she not answer our signal?" returned the mate. "And are we not watching in the exact direction of Mouse Island?"

"That's true; I wonder I never thought of that before. That light must be on the shore somewhere, then; perhaps on the island itself."

"That is my impression; and it is probably on Mouse Island. As Mr. Ready had no lantern that I know of in his boat, it must be either a torch or a fire that we see. If it was a torch, we should see it often; if a fire, we might only see the flickerings. In the one case we shall see it again, and then know that they are alive and have seen our signal, and are responding to it; in the other they may not have seen us at all, and are either busy somewhere else about the island or have gone to sleep."

At that moment the fire gave an unusually bright flicker, and sent its flames up into the sky, while the flickering continued, though with much smaller flames, for several seconds.

"There!" said Mr. Cooper. "There is no need of waving that lantern any more now. We had better leave it here on the end of the oar as a guide, but it is plain enough to me now that it is a fire, and they have probably gone to sleep long before this, it now being quite dark and rather late. They must have lost their boat, or

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they never would stay out there such a damp night as this. The quicker we get over there the better, I am thinking."

"I believe you are right," said Mr. Taylor.

Leaving the lantern on the oar, propped up in the "American man," the two then went down to report to those at the house what they had seen.

"Get the boat at once," said Mr. Benton, when he had heard the report, "and row over to the island as quick as you can, — if you can find it."

"No fear of that," returned the mate. "The night is dark, but 'tis clear. There is no mist or fog, I mean."

"Exactly; I understand you; go at once."

The mate went out, and was soon followed by Mr. Taylor, who had hastily gathered several overcoats upon his arm, to put over the boys in case they should be found wet. Upon the wharf the men had already loosened the boat, and were ready to pull off. Mr. Taylor jumped into the boat, and everything being ready, the word was given, and the men began rapidly but steadily to pull off into the darkness.

"Oh, dear!" cried Eva, as soon as the door was closed, "I do hope that nobody is drowned. I am awfully afraid that something terrible has happened."

"If anything *has* happened," remarked Mr. Benton in his matter-of-fact business way, "the quicker we know it the better."

"I really can't imagine in what condition those children must be," remarked Mr. Benton. "If they have lost their boat and swam ashore, they are probably wet, and cold, and hungry. My dear, perhaps you had better stir the fire up and warm some coffee."

Mrs. Benton put a few sticks of wood in the stove,

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filled the coffee-pot, and placed it over the fire; then she returned to her seat and took up her sewing, while all occupied their time as patiently and as pleasantly as they could until news of the absent ones should come.

Meanwhile the boat was rowed silently yet swiftly from the harbor out into the bay. After rounding the point, Mr. Cooper steered directly for the island, and bidding the men row with all their might, he turned and began to talk with Mr. Taylor.

"I can't see what has kept them away," said Mr. Cooper, "unless things *are* as I have supposed."

"I think your suppositions are reasonable, at any rate," replied the other.

"But how could they have lost their boat? Did a squall strike it and did it capsize? In such a case their matches would be too wet to light, it seems to me; yet they might have time to dry them provided they were really damaged. I am greatly of the opinion that, after landing at the island she must have drifted off, either with one of the boys alone in her, or empty, and thus left the others helpless, as well as whoever might have happened to be in the boat."

"I hope those boys know enough by this time to be able to manage a boat, and if they could you may be sure they would soon return again, had any one of them been driven out to sea," remarked Mr. Taylor, in a low voice.

"I've made up my mind, very decidedly," said the mate, "that either a very bad accident has happened, or else, landing on the island to avoid the squall, which was directly against their returning home, their boat has floated off with the tide and left them helpless."

All this while their boat was slowly approaching the island. Soon it passed the shade of a huge rock, that

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had hitherto hidden their view, and they beheld the fire upon the shore of the island. A few moments later and they had reached the beach and jumped ashore.

Tired after their afternoon's work, Mr. Ready and the boys slept as sound as logs; they were entirely unconscious that hardly an hour after they had lain down four grown men had landed within ten feet of them, and were then warming their hands at the fire and watching the sleepers.

"That don't look much like any very serious accident," remarked Mr. Taylor, laughing and shrugging his shoulders as he held his hands toward the fire, and tried to warm himself, for the night air was quite chilly.

"I should say not," remarked Mr. Cooper. "I'll warrant the boys, at least, and Mr. Ready too, as for that matter, have been having a good time of it."

"A regular camping out spree," laughed the other. "It seems too bad to wake them up. We might go away and leave them, and come again for them in the morning."

Mr. Cooper then stooped down and touched Mr. Ready lightly on the arm; the latter, being a good seaman, was awakened instantly, and immediately aroused himself and sat up, rubbing his eyes, and surveying the group before him with repeated short stares of wonderment.

"Hum!" was the first expression from Mr. Ready's lips, when he could recover from his astonishment sufficiently to speak.

"Hum! seems to me the enemy has 'caught us napping,' and we are took."

Mr. Taylor sort of laughed all over, as he huddled up over the fire, but made no reply.

"Well! what are you going to do with us, now you have got us, Mr. Enemy?"

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"Take you home," growled Mr. Cooper. "You ought to have a keeper, *you* had; you're too young to take care of yourself, *you* are. You're wus'n a small boy, *you* be."

"Lud-o'-massy! what you talking about?" said Mr. Ready, now fully aroused. "You don't know any more about what yer talking about than an old bantam. How did you expect me to get back without the boat? I can't walk on the water, and I an't got wings any more than you have, and an't likely to have, either!"

"Of course you can't back without a boat; but where *is* your boat?"

"How do I know? We fastened it stout enough, but the tide wore the rope off the end of the rock, and 'twas gone before we knew it."

"Yes, I *do* think you need a keeper!" remarked Mr. Cooper. "You need one bad, you do; I thought you was a sailor and not a confounded land-lubber."

Mr. Ready was full of good-nature; no one could ever make him cross, but this was too much, and he immediately began to take off his coat and roll up his sleeves. Then he doubled up one fist and began pounding it in the hollow of his other hand.

"There, sir!" exclaimed Mr. Ready, "I'm prepared to fight the hull of yer; singly, individooally, and tergether."

"Put on your coat, man," said Mr. Taylor, laughing. "You'll catch your death!"

"Well, I don't know but what 'twould be just as well," returned Mr. Ready. "I guess I'll take your advice, *especially*," and Mr. Ready emphasized this word, particularly, "*especially* as this gentleman," poking his thumb in the direction of Mr. Cooper, "backs out—"

Mr. Cooper stepped out and in a twinkling grasped

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Mr. Ready by the arms, and laid him on the sand at his feet in a most thorough and seaman-like manner.

"—'til he can get at the enemy's rear," continued Mr. Ready, rising and brushing off the sand.

At this everybody laughed so heartily that even the sleeping boys rolled over and opened their eyes, to see what all the noise was about.

A moment later and all hands tumbled into the boat, and were soon making their way home in the best of humor.

In half an hour the boat had reached the landing, and the party rushed into the house to meet with a hearty welcome from those in waiting for them. The hot coffee, a plate of sea biscuits, and several other articles of food were brought out, and all joined in the lunch; even Mrs. Benton and Mr. Benton nibbling a piece of the hardtack. Then came the story of how the boat was lost, and how they had prepared to camp out until somebody should come to the rescue; and finally, how they were awakened and brought home.

"As for the lost boat," said Mr. Ready, "I am afraid she's gone where the good old *Sea Foam* has gone, and that *we'll* never see her again."

"That's of no account whatever, provided you are all safe," remarked Mr. Benton.

"We are all here, anyway," laughed Mr. Ready.

"Well, we'll be thankful for that and go to bed, then," remarked the former.

A little later and the house was wrapped in slumber, all being pretty thoroughly tired out.

The next morning when the boys came down to breakfast, rather late in the day for them, and well on toward nine o'clock, they found Eva all rigged out in

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the worst clothes she could find, and busily wrapping up a lunch.

"What you doing, Eva?" cried Freddie.

"You may be sure *I* shan't tell, now," retorted Eva. "You've all had your fun; now I'm going to have mine. Come, Mr. Taylor, I'm ready."

And the two walked off arm in arm, the former with two fish-poles carefully done up together and thrown over his shoulder.

"Well, I declare, if that isn't game. I say, boys, if they an't going fishing, I will give in."

"Yes, we *are* going fishing, and not for tomcods or sculpin, either."

"Salmon," cried Freddie, "I guess by the looks."

"You wait and you'll see!"

"That's what I guess we'll have to do," said Allie, as Eva disappeared around the corner of the house. "I say, Max!"

"Well, what is it?"

"Won't you give me another of those cod heads?"

"Yes, my boy; two of them if you want," said Max, dishing up a large one and putting it on Allie's plate.

"What can we find to do with ourselves to-day?" remarked the disconsolate Freddie. "I am almost as tired as I was last night. I think it was awfully mean to wake us up last night and bring us home."

"I wonder if they'll find the lost boat?" put in John.

"Oh, no; that's gone, long ago. I shouldn't wonder if it was half way to Newfoundland by this time," said Allie.

"I say, boys, the redberries must be getting ripe. What say all to taking some pails and going out for a try? I believe we can find enough to make it pay."

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The assent was general, and the question of the day, or the morning rather, thus disposed of, all put in a double allowance of breakfast, and started off to find their pails.

The redberry is a species of small cranberry, and, like the cranberry, is dark red when fully ripe. That they could not expect to find now, but yet they might be ripe enough to stew or make a pie of with plenty of sugar. The vines grow low and thick, and often oblige one to get on his hands and knees, and part the leaves, before finding the berries. They generally grow in large tracts, and are generally very abundant when they are once found.

Ten minutes sufficed for the boys to get their pails and start for the hill above the house, which they were soon climbing while searching carefully, in every level spot as they went, for signs of berries.

"Here's a patch!" cried John, stooping and picking some berries.

"Of leaves, I guess," laughed Freddie, seeing that John stopped picking all of a sudden and started off in another direction.

"I got three, anyway," said John, triumphantly, showing his pail; "and if that isn't a batch, it is more than either of you has, anyway."

"That's so," said Freddie, silenced at once. "I guess I'd better be still until I find something to talk about."

Just then Allie stooped down and began to pick something; slowly at first, then more rapidly as he progressed. Freddie saw that the patch of green, at which Allie was at work, extended some distance up the hill and to the left, and, taking the clue, he silently started for the other end of it; nor was he disappointed, the berries being as thick there as where Allie was. As

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John had wandered off to the right, the two boys picked on in silence.

Just then John caught sight of a butterfly, and, dropping his pail with the three berries in it, which were spilled out and consequently lost, he was off and away, swinging his cap and calling on the other boys to look after his berries.

While John was after the butterfly, the other boys picked berries, which were thick, and some even almost wholly ripe in the place that they had found.

In a few minutes John came running back again,— of course without the butterfly, and in a white heat; by this time the secret could be kept no longer, and John himself was soon picking with the rest.

The patch was large and the berries were thick. The pails were small pint pails except John's, which was a large two-quart one; so the boys picked and emptied into his.

While they were picking, a large bee came quite close to Allie, and lit on a flower near by.

"How I wish I could find a bee-tree, boys," cried he. "Where there are bees there must be honey, somewhere."

"I'd like to see you find it, then," said Freddie.

All the boys agreed that they'd help the successful one to get the honey, if any one would find the tree.

"Let's catch him and tie a piece of string or ribbon to his hind-legs and follow him."

"I'd rather you'd do that," laughed Allie.

"Yes," said John. "I will follow him if you will."

"I guess we won't any of us get any honey from *that* bee," laughed Freddie, as the bee flew off with a loud buzzing noise.

By this time all the pails were full up to the brim,

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and, being so near the house, it was unanimously determined, after having emptied their pails, to return and fill them again.

A short run brought them to the house. Mrs. Benton was delighted to get the fresh berries, and immediately began to pick them over and prepare some pies, while Max soon had the oven heated to receive them.

Half an hour later the boys had filled their pails and again emptied them and started for their third trip, when one of the men came running around the house and shouted that a large flock of ducks had alighted in a cove near the mouth of the bay, just off the point of rocks.

This was indeed news, and all the pails dropped while the boys sought their guns.

After considerable rummaging, several shells with heavy charges were found, and with loaded guns Allie and Freddie crept carefully down to the shelter of the rocks, while John came slowly on some distance behind.

The boys did not see the ducks until they were nearly upon them.

The ducks saw the boys first, and all dived immediately. The boys then ran quickly to the shelter of a large rock close by the water, and were fortunate enough to reach it before the ducks reappeared.

When the ducks began to show their heads, most of them were out of range of the guns, but both boys stood up in plain sight, with their fingers on the locks of their guns, and the guns cocked, in hopes that some of the ducks might be foolish enough to rise within shot. Nor were they entirely disappointed, — two fine large ones appearing quite near them, and apparently utterly unconscious of the nearness of their enemies, — probably

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having been between them and the rock when the rest of the flock dived.

Both guns went off immediately, and two ducks lay back upon the water. Freddie's bird gave a final kick, but soon expired.

"There!" said Allie, as he waited patiently for the tide to land them, "now for roast duck and redberry pie for dinner."

The birds were two beauties, being of the kind called "Coots," and black all over, with white patches on the wings. They were fat and very heavy.

The man felt of them and laughed, as he handed them back, saying, "If we could get half-a-dozen more, now, 'twould be enough for a mess."

Poor fellow! he was doubtless thinking that he would not get much of the ducks, after the rest were satisfied.

"Come out in the boat with me some day," said he, "and we'll get a mess."

The boys readily assented and even agreed to go that afternoon.

The ducks were soon picked (the best of the feathers being saved), and they were handed over to Max, who, in a short time, had them stuffed and roasting away in great style.

Having put away their guns, the boys were just starting out of the door wondering what to do, when Mr. Taylor and Eva came around the house, the latter with a large string of fish, which were suspended from a forked stick which she held in her hands.

"There!" cried Eve, her eyes sparkling and her cheeks quite flushed with animation from her morning's sport; "I have beaten you all, you lazy things, this morning, and just in time for dinner, too!"

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Max came to the door, just then, and winked to the boys, as he laughed and said yes, to Eva's entreaty to fry some for dinner.

"Because you know!" cried that little miss, "they are always nicest when they are just out of the water."

At last dinner-time came, and all thought it strange that there was nothing on the table when they sat down, and great was the mystery when a huge covered platter was placed before Mr. Taylor; when it was uncovered it was found to contain trout; then another mystery appeared, placed at the other end of the table, which proved to be fried codfishes' tongues, — for it seemed that Max had prepared a treat also, all of his own; but the third surprise was the two roast ducks, placed before Mr. Benton, — while two other dishes, one of cranberry, and the other of apple-sauce, capped the climax.

"Why really, Max!" said Mr. Benton, "you would do credit to a first-class Boston hotel; you have outdone yourself."

Max laughed and thought of the pies yet to come.

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CHAPTER XIII.

A PICNIC.

AND now the fishing season was drawing to a close. So far it had been a great success. In was nearing the last of September, and the fish were growing larger; the boats were obliged to go farther away from the shore for their cargoes, consequently the men — for the boys no longer, or rarely, accompanied them now — were obliged to fish in deeper water, using heavier weights and stouter lines. At last the last day of September arrived, and Mr. Benton gave the order to close the "fishery."

The second day following, for it would take a day to clean things up and finish the business, was to be a grand celebration. The men were to be treated to the best dinner the place afforded, and undergo the ceremony of a discharge, by which they were to understand that there was no more hard daily labor to be imposed on them, unless some vessel should be signaled to take them off. Their time was to be their own.

All the fish had been washed in troughs, spread out in the sun to dry, and could now be safely packed away, tied up in bundles of a quintal — one hundred and twelve pounds dry — each. When the fish had been carefully weighed and bundled, it was found that the whole amount counted up to nearly one thousand quintals, including the catch of the last three weeks, which were

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yet too green to be bundled, but which a few days of warm weather would soon dry.

To this were to be added three barrels of salted trout, caught near the shore in the trout nets which the boys had set, and half-a-dozen fair sized salmon, — those had been caught in the same nets with the trout.

The cry on every side now seemed to be:

> "What to do next," said Robin to Bobbin;
> "What to do next," said Jack-all-alone;
> "What to do next," said this one to that one;
> "What to do next," said *every one!*

And as nothing else appeared to turn up, the reply was:

> "Let's go to the woods," said Robin to Bobbin;
> "Let's go to the woods," said Jack-all-alone;
> "Let's go to the woods," said this one to that one;
> "Let's go to the woods," said *every one!*

So it was decided to hold a grand picnic on that day, and Mrs. Benton, Max, and Eva set about making preparations for the event.

The first question to decide was where to hold this grand celebration. The boys were in favor of the cave, — which possessed many attractions, but whose chief difficulty was the hard climb to the entrance. The older and wiser heads were, therefore, in favor of the lake, — and especially for this reason: There was a cool brook trickling down through a bed of moss and ferns near by, a fine carpet of dry moss to sit upon and on which to spread the cloth for dinner, and the whole shadowed and overhung by tall larches, spruces, and beeches, with their white bark. There were plenty of rocky channels and ravines close by, some of the rocks quite brown and

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bare, others wholly or partly overgrown with moss and vegetation.

"It's the easiest place to get to, and the prettiest when you get there!" declared Eva, so very emphatically that no one dared to argue in favor of the cave after that.

When the morning of the day arrived, and after the place had been decided on, the committee on refreshments went to work to get up a dinner. There was a large boiled ham to do up and stow away in the basket, a big dish full of fresh lobster to pick out carefully and neatly, and four cold ducks. "Not half enough," said Eva, who seemed to take command, in spite of Mrs. Benton's attempts at remonstrance. So two more ducks were added.

"There!" exclaimed Fred, bursting into the room, and throwing a large, and apparently heavy article upon the table. "There! I shot it all myself."

"What is it?" cried Eva, excitedly.

"Why, it's a great goose, *that's* what it is!" replied Fred.

"Whew! Just the thing! hurry and pick him, and I'll put in some more wood, and we'll have just time enough to roast him," laughed Max, rubbing his hands together. "How surprised they'll all be, if they don't know it beforehand. There now, look sharp."

Fred did look sharp, and having picked him and cut off the head, wings, and legs, for trophies, he handed the body to Max, to be singed, who soon transferred it to the oven.

This was a grand secret, and both Eva and Fred were fairly bursting to tell it. Another basket was packed with doughnuts and cheese; another had several kinds of cake; and still a third was loaded with pies.

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There was a delicious kind of blueberry growing on the hills; but when ripe, they were quite soft and hard to pick, yet the boys had gathered a large two-quart pail full. These now formed a part of the lunch, and an immense bowl of sugar was also packed into the basket to eat with them. Several stone jugs full of fresh spruce beer were added, and by seven o'clock all the baskets were full.

Max then got the barrow which the men used for their fish, and, after giving it a thorough washing, inside and out, loaded the baskets into it, and all was ready.

"All hands, ahoy!" shouted Max. "Where are you? This is my day, I'm off for the woods," laughed Max, as he grasped the handles of the barrow and started toward the lake.

John and Allie had already gone off with Mr. Taylor, to find the best place to camp out, and the rest followed after Max.

Max had Fred to help him, yet the barrow, full of heavy baskets, and carried over the rough, uneven rocks, was enough to make them both warm.

The others walked behind, and chatted pleasantly together as they proceeded along.

"How much longer are we to stay here, do you think, papa?" asked Eva.

"I'm sure I have not the slightest idea, my child," remarked Mr. Benton. "I would like to start for home to-morrow; we *may* have to spend the winter here."

"Oh, dear! I do hope that we can get home before the snow comes. It's too beautiful here to have to spoil it all by a winter scene, which must be terribly gloomy."

"We have been fortunate enough, so far," said Mrs. Benton; "think how much worse it might have been.

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We are all alive and well, and that is one great comfort, at any rate."

"I don't think that it would be so terrible an affair to remain here over winter, after all," remarked Mr. Benton, in his philosophical way. "We have stood the summer pretty well."

"Yes, we have had a splendid time, but then it was summer, and we weren't cooped up for six months all together," added Eva.

While the older people were talking and chatting, the boys were having quite an adventure. They had found a porcupine, had run him up a tree, and were now debating as to how to get him without cutting down the tree.

"You mustn't go too near him," said Mr. Taylor, "for if one of those quills should get into you, it would be bad business."

"Do porcupines really shoot their quills at people?" asked Allie.

"No," replied Mr. Taylor, "but they fall out very easily, and the least touch will detach them. If they stick into you they cause great pain, so you had best be careful."

While they were all wondering what to do, Max and Fred came along. The former stopped, set the barrow down, and, throwing off his jacket, immediately began to climb the tree.

"Ah, my fine rogue!" cried Max, "I've caught you, now, for sure!" and Max climbed on up the trunk, while the porcupine, seeming to know his danger, crawled to the very end of one of the highest branches. "There, you are in just the place I want you to be in," said Max exultantly. "Now get some stones or clubs ready for him the moment he falls."

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The porcupine had gone as far as he could on the limb without falling, and as to retrace his steps would be to run right into Max, he chose to remain where he was. Max reached the branches, and was soon as near the animal as he could conveniently get, but this was still some distance away.

Max tried to shake the limb, but it was too stout. Then he gave one long look at the porcupine, and grasping the limb with his hands, and head pointed outward, he began to traverse it, sailor-fashion, by throwing each leg, alternately, around it, as he progressed. This plan was not without some danger, but Max did not seem to care if he could only get the porcupine.

After awhile, the limb began to bend. Then Max, letting his feet drop, so that he held the limb by his hands only, gave it such a vigorous shaking that the porcupine dropped almost immediately.

The boys were ready with clubs, and several tough whacks soon made an end of him.

Max carefully worked his way back, just as he had come, and was on the ground at the foot of the tree with the boys, as the rest of the family arrived at the scene of action.

When they had all examined the animal, Max put him on the barrow, and they took up their line of march for the lake, once more.

"Well, boys," said Mr. Taylor; "here we are."

Max set down the barrow and wiped his face with his handkerchief, while Mr. Benton sat down upon a rock and did exactly the same thing.

The place selected was a smooth grassy level, just above a beach of pure white sand on the margin of the lake, and below the tall trees of the woods above; back

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of them a row of trees sheltered the place from the sun, where a small brook trickled down from the woods into the lake.

"This is, indeed, a charming place," said Mr. Benton.

Max then took up the porcupine and laid it on a big stone near by, and, unloading the barrow, started off with Mr. Taylor and the boys for an hour's ramble. Mr. Taylor, as usual, had not proceeded far, when he espied a good place to fish, so he pulled out a line, fastened a fly-hook to it, and cutting a long, straight alder for a pole, began to fish. The others proceeded without him.

They scrambled on, over rocks, through the thick, tangled masses of spruce, up to the top of a tall cliff, where they could overlook the lake and the party below, — waving their hats and shouting, as they went.

"Let's take a bath," cried Allie. — "Here's a splendid little pond!"

All agreed to this, and were soon splashing in the cool water with great delight.

All of a sudden Fred gave a tremendous scream.

"What's the matter!" shouted the other boys, all at once.

"Nothing!" cried Fred, "but a big mosquito bit me just behind my ear. Here he is again!" and Fred made a plunge under the water.

When he came up again, puffing and blowing, he stared around him with such big eyes, and such a wild manner, that the other boys burst out laughing.

"I don't see what you are all laughing at," said Fred.

"Of course you don't!" said John, laughing harder than ever.

"Where is he gone?" asked Fred, supposing the boys were thinking, like himself, of the mosquito.

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"Into the water!" said Allie, thinking more of Fred than of the mosquito.

"Did you see him?" asked Fred, still meaning the mosquito.

"Yes!" replied Allie, meaning Fred himself.

"Where is he?"

"There he is, in the water."

"Where?"

"There!" cried Allie, pointing at Fred.

It now began to dawn upon Fred that the other boys were laughing at him, so with a great scoop of both hands he sent a cloud of water on Max, who happened to be the nearest, and then made a plunge and struck for the middle of the pond. Max was after him in a second, — but the pond was small, and shoaled so rapidly, that Fred was out again and standing on the other beach before Max caught up with him.

After a short time spent in this way, the boys came out and dressed again, feeling greatly refreshed for their bath.

"Now, where shall we go?" asked Allie.

"Follow me!" shouted Max, as he plunged into a mass of young spruces near by.

The boys all followed and soon caught Max, who was cutting off several small, roundish balls of a dark substance from one of the trees, and putting it into a piece of paper which he held in his hand.

"Spruce gum. My jimmy!" exclaimed Fred; a moment later all the boys were at work scraping and cutting. As there were plenty of trees there was plenty of gum, and in fifteen minutes they had between them nearly half a pound of good, clean gum.

"There!" said Max, "that will give you something to do for the next month."

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Each boy selected a fine piece and put it into his mouth, the heat of the tongue soon converted it into a most sweet tasting and pliant wax, — much different from the impure mixtures sold under the name of "Chewing Gum," at home.

"This is something like!" cried Allie. "It's just like candy, only it don't dissolve."

"You'll chew that a good while," laughed Max, "before it does dissolve. I'm greatly afraid that you'll swallow it first."

After rambling about for some time the boys worked their way around to where they had left Mr. Taylor fishing. Mr. Taylor had four fine large trout on a string near by, and was just in the act of throwing his line for another, which he had started but failed to catch.

"There, boys!" said Mr. Taylor, "that beats your work this morning, I'll wager."

As Mr. Taylor stared in some surprise at Fred, who happened to be the nearest, Fred opened his mouth, pulled out an immense chew of gum, and held it up in great admiration.

"Pure! Mr. Taylor, have a piece?" and Fred unwrapped his paper and handed out a large, clean lump.

Mr. Taylor laughed, shrugged his shoulders, looked at all four of the boys, laughed, or rather smiled again, and then took the piece, and put it into his mouth.

"I suppose I might as well be in fashion," he remarked.

Leaving Mr. Taylor still fishing, the boys returned to the place where the others were, and sat down to rest.

Eva had got out a fish line, and was trying her luck in the small brook near by. She had become quite a "fisherman," under the instructions of Mr. Taylor, and had already captured a dozen small fellows between six and eight inches in length.

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"Great lazy boys!" cried that charming little lady. "Been off for an hour, and brought back absolutely nothing; ain't you ashamed?"

Allie then gave her some gum, which caused her to change her tune immediately.

Mr. and Mrs. Benton now unpacked the baskets, the latter having found a clean place and spread the cloth, and soon the various dishes were ranged in festal order about the genial board.

When the goose came out, everybody raised a shout.

"Hello! what have you got there?" asked Mr. Benton. "Where did that come from?"

Fred ran off and got behind a big rock, where he could overhear the others, who all crowded around to see the strange object.

After a long look, and many eager questions, it came out.

"Where's Fred?" exclaimed Allie.

Then there was a grand hunt for Fred, who was soon found, and became the hero of the day.

While he was telling how he shot the goose, Max was loading the cloth with good things from the baskets.

Very soon everybody was busily engaged eating. Max had all he could do to keep the plates full, and silence reigned supreme, save for the tapping of a woodpecker upon some hollow tree not far away, and the rippling of the brook.

"Say something, somebody!" cried Eva.

"Mr. Bemis would like another piece of duck," said Freddie.

"And Fred wants another piece of goose," remarked Mr. Bemis passing his own plate for the duck.

"Well, you shall both have both," laughed Max.

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It took nearly an hour to eat that lunch. Nearly an hour? Yes, nearer two hours. The boys would eat all they could and then run and fish, or be off after this thing or that thing, then come back and eat again. Even the older ones returned to their plates several times after they had apparently finished.

After dinner they all lay around and talked and laughed for nearly an hour, when the older people went back to the house and laid down to nap away the afternoon. The younger people amused themselves in rambling about the woods, and in fishing.

Mr. Taylor caught his twelfth big trout, the smallest of which would weigh half a pound, and the largest nearly a pound and a half. Eva caught her twentieth, in the small brook, some of them reaching in size that of Mr. Taylor's smallest.

"I don't care!" remarked that young lady, "mine will be the nicest eating."

"We can have them all for supper," said Fred, "then we can tell which *are* the best."

"Supper!" cried Mr. Taylor, "who dares to talk of supper, now? As for me, *I* couldn't eat any supper, just now, if I had it."

"I shouldn't think any of us could, *now*," laughed Allie.

"I've got a dozen more fish to catch yet," remarked Mr. Taylor, "before the afternoon ends"; and away he went with his line and pole.

Max having finished his dinner was carefully filling his pipe for an after dinner smoke.

"I never smokes," said he, "except after a good dinner."

"How much tobacco have you used up since we came here?" asked Freddie, laughing.

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"Less than half a pound," replied Max.

"Well, half a pound in four months wouldn't make a *very* hard smoker of you. It's half a pound more than my mother would let *me* use though," said Freddie.

"And 'tis half a pound more than you ought to use to be perfectly happy," laughed Max.

"Then, I judge you are *not* perfectly happy."

Max laughed, but said:

"Don't I look happy?"

"Yes, you do!" exclaimed Fred.

"Well, I'm not, then," said Max. — "Think of these dishes to wash, and a supper to get into the bargain."

"Where's the porcupine?" asked John.

All the boys jumped, and ran to look for the porcupine, but it was nowhere to be seen.

Then began a long search for the missing article, which was found finally, just where it had been put; but propped up and apparently gnawing a big bone.

Everybody set up a shout at the sight, and Max was at once accused of the deed. Max laughed with the rest and did not deny it. He even very generously offered him his pipe, for a smoke, but of course the porcupine didn't smoke.

The boys now started off on an exploring expedition for the other side of the pond.

They had not gone far before a tremendous drumming sound was heard right above them, and, in a moment, a big partridge flew off to the left. Scarcely had they gone ten paces more when another flew off to the right. Then they heard the chattering of a squirrel, and, hearing a slight splash, they turned and saw a small dark object making its way rapidly across the lake to a little island, not far off.

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"What is it!" cried Freddie.

"I guess it's either a mink or a musk-rat," said Allie.

At that moment the animal evidently saw the boys, or heard them, for it dived and did not appear in sight again.

"What a pity we have not got our guns, groaned Fred.

"We might go back and get them," said Allie.

As it was decided not to go for the guns, the party proceeded: now through tangled spruces, now over marshy ground and deep moss, through which they sunk to the knee at every step, until the boys finally came out at a clear space where flowed a small stream; from here they could see Max hard at work clearing up the dishes, and loading the barrow.

"Let's go to the top of that big rock," said John.

So the boys went off. It was a tremendous climb. At first the spruces were so thick that they almost covered the heads of the climbers. By and by they became thinner, and finally the rock itself was gained. A few moments of climbing brought them to the crest of the peak, whence they had a splendid view. Rocks and spruces all around them, and the lake, like a mirror, framed by nature, lay at their feet, beautiful and placid.

"I tell you, boys, this pays for the trouble!" said Fred, after all had gazed for some moments in silence at the scene before them. "But there is Max signaling to us; let's go and help him home," and off they went, down the hill, again into the spruce thicket, and an hour later all had reached home once more, and the shades of evening were fast approaching.

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CHAPTER XIV.

A TRIP "DOWN ALONG."

AND now the season was beginning to advance. The days grew short and the nights grew long; while the faces of the whole party began to lengthen, as the prospect of having to spend the winter where they were grew upon them.

Mr. Benton, of all around him, however, preserved an imperturbable countenance, and simply smiled whenever the subject was mentioned to him or in his presence. Mr. Ready, also, it is true, looked grave, but always laughed the matter off with a knowing wink; yet Mr. Cooper, who seemed in his confidence, shook his head even to Mr. Ready's wink: but then the latter would say, "he never was on this coast before; he never was born and brought up here, like *me*."

At length, one morning, about a week after the picnic, Mr. Benton, at the breakfast table, after finishing his cup of coffee, sat for some moments tapping the end of his teaspoon upon the table, apparently in deep thought; at last he looked up with a smile and rather pleased expression of countenance, as if he had just solved some deep mental problem, and then said:

"Well, Mr. Cooper, I guess you had better get the boats ready for a trip 'down along.'"

Of course everybody, not already in the secret, started at the mention of the words "down along." Where was

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this "down along"? As this was the thought that flashed across everybody's mind, so everybody put the question:

"Where's that?"

"Why, that's 'down along,'" laughed Mr. Ready, winking very hard, and rubbing his hands together as if the idea, as it really did, especially commended itself to him personally. "I told 'em they'd hev to come to it, sooner or later, — it's only a little later, and we hope not too late."

"What is it? where is it? and when is it?" asked Freddie, excitedly.

While Mr. Ready explained, Mr. Benton looked on benignly and smiled; Mr. Cooper looked grave and even thoughtful, while the rest listened with open eyes and ears.

"Why, you see," began Mr. Ready, "that we are just out of the way of the sailing vessels. You see enough of them far out to sea, but none have come near us — or if they have it has been in the night — so we must be on an unfrequented part of the coast, at a turn or bend of the coast line, and out of their path. Now if we go up the coast far enough, or down the coast far enough, either way, we are sure to come to some port. If we reach a port, find a vessel going our way, we can return in her and load for home. If we can't do that we can charter one, without doubt, for very little, to take us back. I'm for going down the coast, or 'down along,' as we used to say, because I think I know where we are; the others want to go up the coast. At any rate, we are going to try it *down*, and you'll all hev a chance to laugh at me if we don't strike something."

To say that everybody was wild with excitement was

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putting it mild. It now occurred to them that perhaps after all their stay had not been compulsory, and that Mr. Benton had foreseen just how events would happen from the very first.

"I declare," said Freddie, "it spoils all the fun of the thing. We haven't been cast away on a desert island, after all. Perhaps some one will bring the *Sea Foam* around the corner of the bay; we will load her and start off, and suddenly wake up and find that we are in Boston."

"Stranger things than that *have* happened," remarked Allie.

"I don't really imagine, though, that that thing *will* happen, just at present," said Freddie.

"Probably not, yet we may find another vessel just as good as the *Sea Foam;* and you *may* wake up some fine morning and find her anchored 'just around the corner of the bay,' and then we will all 'load her and start off,'" laughed Mr. Ready. "That is just what we are going to try to do, and just as soon as we can."

Mr. Cooper and Mr. Ready now started off to prepare the boats for the trip, and provision them for a week, for this purpose. It was decided to spend a week in going to the northeastward, and, if that plan did not succeed, then to return and try the same experiment in the opposite direction.

And now all hands gathered together to take council regarding the proposed trip. After some debate it was decided to let the boys go in the boat with Mr. Ready, while Mr. Cooper and two of the men went in the other. A large piece of canvas was stowed away in one of the boats for a tent; and an axe, and cooking utensils, with plenty of provisions, were so portioned between them as to about equalize their burdens.

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At length all was prepared, and Mr. Ready's hearty, "All aboard!" rang out clear and strong, as it always did when things went to please him.

All hands had a good hot dinner, as it was nearly noon, just before the final start, and then hurried down to the boats, and embarked amid the cheers of the rest of the party who remained on land, — both Mr. Taylor and Mr. Bemis being among the number of the latter.

As there was very little wind stirring, the men were obliged to use the oars, until they reached the outer waters near the mouth of the bay.

Mr. Ready bustled about, trying to get some one — any one — to hold the tiller for him while he hoisted the sail, as he felt a slight puff of wind coming.

"How can I do anything here, and you boys keeping up such a noise?" grumbled that gentleman, beginning to scold as he became more and more at home in his position as commander of the expedition.

"If he's like this now, what will he be before the end of the voyage?" whispered Freddie. "I guess we'd better mind him."

The boys then stopped their shouting, and went so manfully at work to hoist the sail, while Freddie grasped hold of the tiller and put the boat into the wind, that Mr. Ready, who was just about raising his voice to utter another and fiercer scold, stopped, stood still, and looked about him in utter amazement.

Meanwhile a faint breath of wind shook the sails of the boat, and, being nearer in shore than the other boat, she profited by the breeze, while the men in the other were rowing to gain a position where they could hoist their sails also.

This was soon reached, and, a moment later, both boats

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were gliding slowly yet perceptibly along, close by the bank, toward the stronger breeze which could now be seen ruffling the water farther out at the mouth of the bay. The waving hats, and Eva's parting "Good luck, Freddie," were received as the boats rounded the point and started "down along."

When once fairly out of the bay the breeze was fair and fresh, and both boats were wafted along upon its wings like immense sea gulls.

Before they had gone very far, Allie chanced to look up, and there stood Eva, and all the rest of the party, vigorously waving their hats and handkerchiefs on the cliffs above.

"See! there they all are!" cried Allie, pointing to the top of the cliff; and standing up in the boat he swung his hat over his head and shouted "Good bye!" at the top of his voice.

"Sit down!" exclaimed Freddie; "they can't hear you."

"I don't know that," returned Allie; "the voice goes twice as far on the water as it does on land. Well, we're off now, anyway."

The boats now rounded a point of the rocks that shut them off from the sight of those on the lookout, high as it was.

"Yes, we're off now. Come, get out of the middle of the boat, can't you!" vociferated Mr. Ready to Fred, who happened to be taking up considerable room just then with his feet, in the exact line of the former's movements.

Freddie moved, and in so doing jostled Allie, who again jostled Mr. Ready.

"Dear me," said the latter; "how can you boys be both sides of the boat at once?"

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The boys set up a shout of laughter, that brought even Mr. Ready to his senses.

"Well, boys," said he, laughing with the rest. "one hardly gets time to think, before —"

Mr. Ready did not complete his sentence, for a flaw of wind struck the sail and careened the little boat to the very water's edge. Before he had time to move she had returned to her former upright position, safe and sound, with nothing missing save a hat, which was soon recovered dripping wet on the end of one of the oars.

"Well, that was a narrow escape," said Mr. Ready. "Who saw that flaw a-coming? I didn't, for one, and I guess I'd better be tending to my business if it's liable to be interrupted like that again," and he took the helm, which, up to that time, Allie had been holding.

The wind having freshened somewhat, the boat was now headed directly across the mouth of a bay, with a good breeze, and for the opposite point. The bay seemed to be pretty large, but there was no time to enter and examine it, so they continued; rounding the farther point they proceeded down the coast, keeping in shore near enough to land at any time, should occasion require. Mr. Cooper followed closely in the other boat, and thus, with fair wind, the party proceeded on their way.

The wind continued steady all the afternoon, and the boats had covered some twenty miles, by Mr. Cooper's rough reckoning made by allowing a line, with a stick of wood on the end of it, to run out a given number of feet, and counting the seconds by the watch, then computing the time run, before darkness began to set in; even then the few clouds in the sky seemed to have more effect in darkening the surrounding atmosphere than the twilight itself, which is so noted for its length in this region.

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At any rate it began to grow dark, so, finding a convenient cove, the boats were headed for shore, where they soon touched ground in a sheltered cove of calm water. A moment later, all had jumped on shore and drawn them high and dry upon a little plat of grass close by.

"I guess we might as well stay here to-night, hadn't we, Mr. Cooper?" asked Mr. Ready. "It seems to be a good place, and well sheltered up by those spruces yonder."

"You're the captain, Mr. Ready," said Mr. Cooper rather glumly, yet good-naturedly withal. "We do as you say."

"I imagine you'll all be glad enough to stay here for to-night, then," laughed Mr. Ready, "so pitch tent, get supper, and prepare for the night, are my orders; unless you think of anything any better."

The long sail had made all glad to get on land once more, and the men set about their work with a will. In the course of half an hour a booth of spruce branches had been erected, open at the front, and with a sloping roof, over which was thrown the piece of canvas that had been brought with them as a partial protection against the rain, in case it should fall during the night, and then tied tightly to the side-bars of the hut-like structure.

While this was being done, the boys had built a magnificent camp-fire, just in front of the enclosure; and the red-forked flames looked romantic and grand against the dark sky and background of spruces and distant hills. While the coffee kettle was being hung upon a cross-bar suspended upon a pair of forked sticks driven into the ground upon either side of the fire, the men put the fin-

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ishing touches upon the hut, by carpeting it nearly a foot deep with short, mossy boughs of spruce, laying them thicker at the head or inner part of the floor. By the time this was done supper was announced.

It consisted of coffee, ship biscuit or hardtack, a pair of cold roast ducks, and the extra luxury of a small jug of spruce beer.

After supper the men began talking to themselves and laughing, and soon arose and disappeared with the axe into the thicket back of the hut. A few moments later a great chopping was heard, which soon transferred itself to the other side of the hut, but farther back in the woods, and then the men returned as mysteriously as they had come, and sat down by the fire and began smoking, and talking in French among themselves.

"What *have* you been doing?" asked Allie.

"Wait until morning," said one of the men, "and if we have any kind of luck we will let you see, then."

"Dear me," said Allie, "how mysterious."

The men, for reasons best known to themselves, kept silent; and so there was nothing to do but to wait.

Early the next morning, while the boys were yet asleep, one of the men awoke, jumped up, rubbed his eyes, and then began looking for the axe. Having found it, he threw it over his shoulder and started for the woods. Pretty soon, by which time the boys and most of the rest of the party were awake, he was seen returning with a curious looking, black-haired animal thrown over his shoulder. This he brought up to the tent, and flung down on the ground just in front of the place where the boys were collecting some pieces of wood and chippings with which to make a fire.

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"There," said the man; "that's what we got from all our chopping, last night."

"What is it?" asked Allie, who was the nearest.

"What is it?" laughed the man. "That's what we call a carcajou. I didn't think we could get him; they're awfully sly animals."

"How did you do it?" asked Allie.

"Why, you see," returned the man, "we cut down a couple of trees and made deadfalls of them; then baited them, and left them; and this morning we found this fellow, in one of them, with his back broken and a big tree on top of him."

As the man said this the other man, who had accompanied him the night before, came up and giving the carcass a kick said:—

"Well, Barney, my boy, your plan *did* work beautifully, no mistake. I didn't think 'twould succeed, that's a fact."

"Nor I," replied the other, who was none else than Barney, one of the men.

"What will you do with nim now you have caught him?"

"One less of the ugly thaves in this wurld," replied Barney, laughing; "his skin will make a good foot-rest for Miss Eva—"

"Hoity-toity!" laughed Stebbins; "but, faith, I fully agree with you. Shall I strip him for you?"

"Sure," said Barney, with a broad smile, "if yer plaze to do yer part, now I've done mine, 'twill be no more than fair; I'll take it easy and look on and direct, sorter."

Just then Mr. Ready appeared, rubbing his eyes very hard and yawning.

"What ye got there?" remarked Mr. Ready, suddenly

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forgetting that he was sleepy and appearing very much interested. "Now *that* accounts for all the chopping I heard last night. I thought something was in the wind."

After everybody had examined the prize, which was a long thick-bodied, short stout-legged animal, with long black fur, Stebbins took it up by the legs, smoothed down the fur carefully, and cutting a long slit in the skin, between the hind-legs, reaching from the extremity of one foot to that of the other, he ripped it off in a twinkling.

"As nate as a glove!" cried the Irishman, admiringly. "I couldn't have done it any better mesilf, if I'd known how," he added, with true Irish wit.

Stebbins then got up and began walking up and down the shore for some distance in each direction, as if in search of something. Presently he came back with a short piece of weather beaten board, which had been cast high and dry upon the beach; this he proceeded to shape with the hatchet.

"There," said he, when he had finished his work, "there's a good stretcher for you."

Then he pulled the skin of the carcajou over the board, and found that it fitted nicely.

"Now we can let it dry and scrape the fat off at our leisure," said Mr. Stebbins.

The board with the skin on it was laid in the sun, and all hands began to prepare for breakfast which was soon quickly devoured, when the whole party loaded the boats and again set sail for "down along."

It was a clear, bright day. The sun was shining from a sky barely flecked with a few, fleecy white clouds, and the waters sparkled with dashes and flashes from a mil-

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lion little waves that merrily rippled over its surface as far as the eye could reach. White-winged gulls filled the air above; myriads of tern lower down flew along swiftly on swallow-like wing, or shot, like arrows from concealed bows, down into the waters in search of their prey. An occasional long black line, low down near the horizon, told that a flock of ducks was passing, and in the water, near by, an occasional pigeon or black guillemot rose inquiringly near the boat for an instant to dive as quickly at the least motion of its occupants. The air was fine, it was exhilarating and fairly intoxicating. Even Mr. Ready relaxed.

"This Labrador air," remarked that gentleman, "is the finest *air* in the world. If any one comes up here for the air, they will never be disappointed, unless the fog stays *all* the time, which is not usual. It is a good illustration of the compensation theory, — a bleak, barren coast must have some attraction to it, after all."

"*I* think it has a good many," said Allie. "I'm sure we shall have something besides the air to remember."

"You certainly will, if we don't come across a schooner before winter sets in," laughed Mr. Ready. "I wintered here once, and I am not anxious to try it again."

"Was it so very fearful ?." asked Freddie.

"Snowed up six months to a day," said Mr. Ready. "How would that suit you ? "

"Bur-r-r ! " murmured Freddie, as he hunched his shoulders and shivered, as if he were really cold. "I'd rather be at home reading about it; 'twould be much more pleasant."

"I quite agree with you there, — but what is this great black object just coming down on us on the right ? "

As he spoke Mr. Ready sheared the boat to come

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nearer the great black object mentioned; and as it floated by all saw that it was an old weather-worn hogshead, or puncheon as the sailors call it.

"Well, Mr. Cooper," cried Mr. Ready, as the other boat came up with his, which was lying in waiting for it, "that looks like business!"

"It does, in fact," remarked the other; "you may be all right, after all; we'll go ahead and see, anyway."

In spite of the apparent evidence derived from the puncheon, the boats pursued their way all that day, until night, without coming upon any real evidence of habitation, or sighting any vessels; and when evening came on, and a landing for the night made, the reckoning gave twenty-three miles for the day's run, or forty-three in all, since the start, and no signs as yet of attaining the object of their journey.

The men were all rather "glum" when they turned to and erected a hut, similar to the one they had built the night before, for their shelter. To add to the prevailing gloominess it began to cloud over, and soon great drops of rain came pattering down upon the canvas roofing of their tent. The cloth was drawn over the front entrance as far as possible, to protect the open side from the rain, and a cold supper of hard biscuits, canned corned-beef, and spruce beer, eaten in silence, — unbroken save by an occasional grumble about hard luck and the weather, and the sound of the rain-drops outside and upon their canvas cover above them. Nearly every one of the party lay in silence, yet wide awake, far into the night, listening to the pattering drops as they increased, then decreased, then finally stopped altogether, — until one by one they fell to sleep. It must have been nearly or quite midnight when Freddie, the last awake, peered out

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of the dripping canvas and beheld the clouds dispersed, and the twinkling stars shining down at him foretelling a pleasant day on the morrow; then he, too, sought his place among the sleepers, rolled up in his blanket, packed a heap of dry spruce under his head, and with his head upon his soft cap was soon sound asleep like the rest of the party.

The next morning all hands were awake betimes. It was another beautiful day, not a cloud in the sky above; but a long, dense, low, white line hung over the water, far out to sea. It was a Labrador or rather a Newfoundland fog, which a light off-shore wind was keeping at a distance.

"If this wind dies down, or changes," remarked Mr. Cooper, "we're caught, sure. Hadn't we better stay where we are till afternoon, at least?"

"Not a bit of it!" replied Mr. Ready. "All aboard! and we'll go as far as we can, keeping along shore, at any rate."

"Just as you say," remarked Mr. Cooper, in a rather grumbling tone of voice, "but *I'd* rather be in than out."

"We can easily patch up as good a shanty as this is," said Mr. Ready, somewhat crossly. "I never got lost in a fog yet!"

"Excepting the one that wrecked the good old *Sea Foam*," laughed Allie.

Mr. Ready saw that he was caught, and that his piloting ability was in imminent peril, but yet he persisted; and soon all were aboard and skipping merrily along, close in shore, down the rugged coast of Labrador.

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CHAPTER XV.

BEATING ABOUT THE BUSH.

ON went Mr. Ready's boat, followed by that of Mr. Cooper's, farther and farther from the morning's camp. As they progressed, the water in shore became shoaler, and full of rocks and sand-bars and impediments of one sort and another until, finally, it was resolved to steer more to the eastward, and hence out into the open waters, to get clear of them.

It was still early in the forenoon, and the sun shining through a slight mist that covered everything about and around them; yet all was bright and pleasant.

"I don't quite like the looks of things," said Mr. Cooper, rather as a word of caution than with a murmur of complaint. "It does seem to me that the farther from land we go the more unwise it is of us. I do hanker arter the shore this morning, somehow or other."

"Humph!" grunted Mr. Ready. "Ther an't no danger; and besides, we could not get ther now ef we wanted to, — ther an't water enough."

"I suppose 'tis too shallow. I thought I had more sense," spoke up Mr. Cooper, in a sharp, disdainful sort of a tone, "than to be caught out here, where we don't know nothing about where we are, in a stiff Newfoundland fog; but I see I an't."

Mr. Ready's only reply was to jibe his boat, just in time to prevent her smashing her small stay against an ugly looking rock right ahead, and turn toward the

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shore once more; but this was only to get out of a shallow spot into deeper water, when he headed her toward the sea again.

"There," said Mr. Ready, "we'll go far enough in this direction to clear the rocks, and then" — he added, in a lower voice, as he saw that the mist, though thin, was really not decreasing any, "perhaps we'd better see if we *can* get in shore a bit nearer."

"I thought you'd come to your senses, at last," said Mr. Cooper, in an equally undertone, who, it seems, heard Mr. Ready's remark, low as it was.

Five minutes later the boats were past the rocks, and once more headed toward the shore; but this time they had gone too far to seaward, and the sun had disappeared behind a thin bank of white mist that was now seen to be hurrying down upon them as fast as a light breeze from the east could drive it, before they had accomplished one-third of the distance to the shore.

"There," cried Mr. Cooper, in despondent rather than triumphant terms, "I knew it would come."

Come it did, and no mistake. Five minutes more and both boats were struggling along, feeling their way toward the shore, in a dense fog.

"Get out the compass-box!" cried Mr. Ready, excitedly, as the full extent of the situation appeared to dawn upon him.

"I can't find it!" returned Allie, up to his elbows in the locker.

"Well! it's there, or it ought to be;" then turning to Mr. Cooper, he cried out: "Is the compass in your boat?"

After a short search, Mr. Cooper replied:

"No! I can't find it anywhere."

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"Then we'll have to steer by the wind," said Mr. Ready, forgetting that he had sounded the rocks, and then jibed the boat in the very opposite direction from where the shore lay, and again at direct right angles to that.

"The boats had better keep as near together as they can," suggested Freddie. "Let's not get any farther away from each other than we have to."

"Here's the fog horn," said John, "anyway!"

"Good! keep hold of that," said Mr. Ready.

Both boats then continued to feel their way along, keeping well together, while the fog, rather increasing than diminishing, remained as a light cloud above and around them.

As it was now getting towards noon, the men in the boats decided to dine; so a bundle of light sticks were drawn from each of the cuddies, and soon the coffee-kettles were suspended from the hooks on the main-masts, and the water simmering over an iron platter full of coals placed over the rocks of the ballast, in regular Newfoundland style.

While the coffee was being made, a can of pressed corned-beef was opened, a small bag of hard bread emptied of its contents, and the tin cups produced.

"Isn't that coffee boiling?" asked Mr. Ready, who was at the helm, of John, who officiated at the coffee-pot.

"Oh, yes!" replied John, "it's boiling splendidly."

"Confound the luck! Can't yer take it off?"

"Oh, yes!" said John, gleefully; "how long do you want it to boil?"

"Not at all! Take it off, can't yer?"

John lifted the kettle off the hook, and set it down in the middle of the boat.

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"Now put the fire out on the sticks, by dipping them into the water; save the best ones to burn again, and throw the rest overboard."

John did as he had been directed, and tossed the half-burned pieces back into the cuddy again, while he dumped the coals on the iron into the water, where they hissed and snapped at a great rate until far out of sight in their wake.

"There," exclaimed Mr. Ready, "that's tolerable good coffee. 'Twould have been better if it hadn't boiled at all, though. Coffee, to be good, wants to be put in cold water and brought to the boiling point, then stopped right there," continued he. As no one disputed him, he added, rather emphatically, "I'll show ye how, sometime."

All the while the dinner was progressing the boats were progressing also; and not only the dinner and the boat, but the fog, that too was progressing.

"Seems as though we'd gone far enough to have struck land," growled Mr. Cooper from the other boat, which was keeping close to Mr. Ready's.

"This trotting 'round without no compass," retorted Mr. Ready, "ain't much fun, anyway. Let's sheer off to the right a little more."

The boats were then jibed again, much to the surprise of the sailors, and especially of Barney the Irishman, who shouted out:

"Shure, then, wud ye be going to cross the gulf intirely?"

"'Cross the gulf!'" put in Mr. Cooper. "Well, I should hope not; we mean to reach land just as soon as we can, and get away from this fog or let it get away from us."

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"Then, if I may be so bold, why don't ye head her right around in exactly the opposite direction? for, 'cording to my calculation, we've jibed twice since we left the pint. Now if we jibe twice back again we'll be headed right in shore, and like enough bring up on the same pint again."

"Seems as though the man was right, Ready. What say you?"

"We can try it," replied Mr. Ready, now thoroughly humbled.

So the boats were put about again and, in half an hour, both had come to a standstill within a dozen rods of the rough, rocky shore; ten minutes later, everything was securely protected, and all on land once more.

"Thank the Lord for *so* much!" said Mr. Ready, fervently.

"That's all right," laughed Freddie, "but *I* think you'd better thank Barney too, for without his speaking you might have been in the middle of the Gulf of St. Lawrence before night."

As this was only too evident, poor Barney was quite overpowered with the hand-shakings and other congratulations which showered down upon him.

"I'm sorry I broke me orders," said Barney, "but I guess the fog turned all our heads."

Everybody laughed at the bull, but no one seemed to care, as all were soon busy erecting a booth for the third time since the trip had begun.

"Fifty miles," exclaimed Mr. Ready, "and no signs of life yet. Either we're on a stretch where there are no houses, or we have passed them all. We've seen vessels from the top of our hill, anyway," he added.

It was indeed a little strange, that they should have

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sailed fifty miles and come across no houses, boats, or vessels of any kind.

"I believe we've passed by twenty coves, only we didn't see the entrances," laughed Mr. Cooper. "No one would have known where our house was, to pass by the place; but I don't see as there's anything to do but to stay here till the fog clears away, anyhow."

As all agreed upon this, the work of completing the booth was put forward with all haste.

It took the men some little time to find the proper means for completing their work, and so the work itself was greatly retarded.

The place where they had landed was the only grassy or level spot that their eyes could find, over quite an area of rocks and high cliffs of brown rock, which appeared everywhere and continued even to the very water's edge, where they disappeared at such an angle as to leave no doubt in the mind of all that if they appeared again at all upon the surface it could not be far to seaward.

"I imagine that there is an island from three to five miles from here," said Mr. Ready.

"Well, what of that?" laughed Allie, as in fact did all the boys, at almost the same time.

"Well, now, let's see. Let's do a little philosophizing," said Mr. Ready, winking very hard. "If there is one island, as from the the nature of this rock there would seem to be, the probability is that as long as the rock continues, both up and down the coast here, there is more than one island. If a good many, as would seem to be the case, we are inside the group and so probably on the mainland. If now we are on the mainland and inside the group, we probably have been too far out to sea when we thought we were following the coast line, and

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only been following the outside of the islands, etc.; so we have passed all the ports, all the houses, if there were any; and all the chances of getting anywhere have been lost. *I* think that when the sun gives us a chance, we better turn around and go back again, but this time *inside.*"

As everybody seemed to agree with Mr. Ready, all hands turned to with alacrity and began to aid the men in their search for the proper materials for erecting the hut.

In one deep ravine on a hillside on the left, a few scraggy trees were at last discovered, and soon the necessary stakes and branches were cut and brought to the place where the hut was to be erected.

"We were awful lucky to find this place," said Mr. Ready. "I don't see how we happened to hit it."

"More luck than anything else," laughed Mr. Cooper, "as everything else has been since we came to this infernal region. I'll warrant that there are twenty such places within a mile of us in either direction."

"Maybe! maybe!" replied Mr. Ready, "but I'm awfully thankful for the good luck."

"Oh yes, so am I," returned the mate; "but I'd be more thankful to get home again — to the States, I mean. You'd never catch me in these parts again."

"So I've said three time before this," laughed Mr. Ready, "and that's all the good it did. Why don't somebody hurry up and build that fire?" he added turning around.

"I can't find a dry match anywhere," retorted Freddie, greatly vexed at his own ill success, after scratching away in vain at several, which he had carefully stowed away in his pocket before starting.

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"Here! that isn't the way!" said Mr. Ready. "Always rub 'em on the seat of your breeches. If they won't go that way they won't go at all, and you can light 'em this way when you can't any other," and suiting the action to the word Mr. Ready struck a match from his own pocket several vigorous blows before proving his theory.

"There," said he, as one blazed and soon caught the birch bark at the bottom of a huge pile of drift and other wood, "there you have it."

A few minutes later, and the flames crackled and shot up their tongues high into the air as the fire warmed with its genial heat everybody near it.

"At last we can get some hot coffee," said Mr. Ready.

Then the things were quickly transferred from the cuddy to the tent or spruce booth, and in a short time a good supper prepared, it now being almost dark. The coffee was made and *not* boiled; several ducks, which had been recently shot, prepared for broiling, and soon hissing and spitting as their skins browned and burst before the fire; some Indian meal corn-cake soon growing light and puffy; while a kettle of potatoes took the place of the coffee kettle, which was moved one side to make room for it, though still kept near the heat.

In half an hour the supper was all ready, and a grand success it was. A small tin pail had been discovered in the back part of the cuddy, in which had been packed a store of sugar, salt, and butter; and these, with the other things, were all now spread out in array, and supper began.

"I don't see, for my part," cried Allie, "but that we get just as good things in Labrador as we do in the United States."

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"Yes, and cooked a great deal better," put in Freddie.

"I guess you are hungry here, that's all," laughed Mr. Ready.

It was hard to get a good dry bed that night. There was no rain, but the fog, now driving in thick and heavy, apparently meaning to stay all night, was damp and sticky and had rendered everything the same. By dint of selecting the lower and less exposed branches, however, and giving them a good heating at the fire, they were enabled to cover the floor of the hut so that, with their blankets, they had a dry bed to sleep on.

The fire was piled high up with wood; and as it grew darker the men told stories and the boys listened until late into the night.

There were legends about Indians and white men; anecdotes of hunters and hunting parties; tales of game, of wonderful shots, and marvellous adventures; and fishing stories without number. All these occupied the time until the fire had burned low, and the last of the wood had been heaped upon the pile, when all hands, already drowsy from talking or listening, rolled up in their blankets and turned over to settle themselves for the night.

"Fog, fog, fog," cried the voice of Mr. Ready, early the next morning, "turn over and go to sleep again, boys;" and suiting the action to the word Mr. Ready wrapped himself up in his great overcoat and blanket, and dropped down in his place once more.

About half an hour afterwards one of the boys awoke, and went so far as to collect a large pile of wood for a fire, but he, too, soon gave it up and turned in again. It was nearly noon before the party straggled out into the already clearing atmosphere and started the fire going.

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"Well, it's really trying to clear away at last," were the words with which Mr. Ready and Mr. Cooper greeted, as each were rubbing their eyes and "getting awake" before a crackling large fire, which had been kindled just outside the tent.

"Wonder if 'twill ever clear up?"

"Tell ye better later," remarked Mr. Cooper, with great gravity. "I want to see that coffee-pot steaming first. Coffee's a first-rate settler to any one's knowledge of what the weather's to be."

Mr. Ready laughed, and began immediately to get breakfast ready.

All the time the fog was slowly lifting. At length, with a grand flash, the sun came out of the bank that had concealed it for so long, and shone once more with its accustomed brilliancy over land and sea.

"Well, let's try it once more," said Mr. Ready, after the morning's meal was finished; "third time never fails, a third time and out, which is it?"

"I guess it's out," laughed Freddie, as he dashed a big pail of water on the embers of the fire.

"Yes, most likely," laughed Mr. Ready, in return; "and now we'll get out, and try for twenty-four hours longer in this direction, and then, if we don't find anything, we'll go home and report; then start in the other direction."

With that the boats were pushed off, the sails hoisted, and the party on the move once more.

"Dear me," exclaimed Freddie, after they had been sailing with a fair breeze, close along shore, for more than an hour, "it *does* seem as though we ought to find something here somewhere. We don't see even a barn."

"Well, I thought I knew where we were," remarked

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Mr. Ready, rather soberly, "but I give it up. We've come fifty odd miles, or thereabouts, and have not seen a house or a living being, and I can't think of any other place, save Anticosti Island, where that thing can be possible, — and I know we cannot be there."

"I stick to what I said at first," put in Mr. Cooper. "If you had watched those schooners as I have, you would be convinced that they must have either come down the river close in shore and then struck across, or else have started from a point not far to the westward of our place, and cruised either across the water from that point, or out to sea to clear the land, and then tacked and headed inland; in which case their line of travel would bring them one or two days' sail, or even more, farther down than we now are."

"All hands ready about," sung out Mr. Ready; "I yield me prisoner. Let's go home."

A shout of laughter went up from everybody at the hearing of this decision, and a moment later the boats were headed in the opposite direction and on their return trip.

"We are just in time to reach last night's stopping place before dark, if the wind holds," remarked Mr. Cooper.

The wind seemed very likely to hold; at any rate it was blowing and freshening every minute.

"We'll have to take in some canvas, if this keeps up much longer," laughed Mr. Ready.

It was so late when they came in sight of the camping-ground of the previous evening, that all were glad to reach a place of rest; and notwithstanding that they had slept until so late that morning, all were very tired. The boys immediately rushed to the booth and lay down, and were soon sound asleep.

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The men gathered some wood, built a fire, and prepared the supper, and yet the tired boys slept on.

"Come," exclaimed Mr. Ready, at last, in despair of their wakening of their own accord. "Come! can't ye get up and have something to eat?" and he gave each of the boys a shaking, which quickly brought them to their senses.

"Of course we will," cried Freddie, as he jumped up and rubbed his eyes.

The others followed his example, and all were soon seated by the genial blaze of the spruce fire, sipping their coffee, and with a huge piece of hardtack in their hands.

"I'll tell you what it is," said Allie, "and no mistake. One can make a meal, and a good one, too, if they are only hungry, from coffee and hardtack."

"If they don't choke," laughed Freddie, as Allie swallowed some coffee the wrong way, and gagged for several minutes before he could recover his tranquility.

"Anybody'd choke," gagged Allie, "to see you sitting there and burning your boots off all so unconsciously."

Freddie gave a yell, as he hitched away from the fire, and gave his foot a dig in the sand close by as a means of extinguishing the smoke, but said nothing.

"Lucky we'll be home soon," remarked Mr. Cooper; "the grub's getting pretty low."

"That's a fact," returned Mr. Ready, "but I guess that, such as it is, it'll last us through. It *will* seem good, though, to get one of Max's pots of bean soup once more."

"Or some fresh fish," remarked Mr. Cooper.

"Or some doughnuts and cheese," added the boys, almost in a breath.

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"And to get into civilized parts once more," remarked Barney.

Just where Barney meant by the "civilized parts" he did not say.

"I guess you're homesick," laughed Freddie.

"Faith," said Barney, "if I only *was* home sick."

It needed very little urging to send all hands to bed early that night.

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CHAPTER XVI.

THE RETURN, THE UP TRIP, AND A NEW AND TERRIBLY EXCITING SCENE.

IT was about four o'clock in the afternoon of the second day after leaving their encampment that the boats rounded the point of land that brought them in sight of home, or at least of the place that was all the home they possessed on these rugged shores.

No one seemed to be about anywhere, and even the house had a deserted sort of a look, with only a thin wreath of light blue smoke, that ascended out of the chimney, to assure them that there were living beings about the place; the boats pursued their way quietly up to the wharf and, being made fast, all hands jumped ashore and hurried up to the house — where the door had already been opened, and Max's genial face appeared assuring them of a cordial reception.

"Well, my boys!" cried Max, as the tired party hastened up the slope. "I was just getting supper for you."

"How did you know we were coming?" asked Freddie, mistaking Max's cordial greeting for real knowledge.

"A little bird came down the chimney and whispered it to me," laughed Max, "so I began to get the supper ready."

"In your mind," laughed Freddie, now beginning to understand.

As the tired troop hurried in and took seats, Mrs.

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Benton and Eva appeared from their rooms to greet them, and such a cordial reception as it was! Mrs. Benton's "Glad to see you, how tired out you all must be, and do have something to eat," showed her motherly sympathy; while Eva was wild with excitement.

Max, who had disappeared as the party entered the house, now returned with a huge keg of newly made spruce beer and a large panful of cookies, which were soon portioned around among the group.

While they were enjoying themselves thus, who should appear but Mr. Benton himself, who, though he had been strolling about the place, had, strangely enough, failed to see the party as they were returning.

"Ah! What! When did you come back?" exclaimed that gentleman, as he opened the door and beheld the party.

"About half an hour ago, or less," remarked Mr. Ready, "and now we're going to try the other direction."

"Humph!" exclaimed Mr. Benton, rather emphatically. "Just as I expected; probably didn't go far enough; stopped too soon. Well, well," he said, after a pause; "try it the other way, now, after a day's rest."

Then they all began to talk of what had taken place during their absence. One party told what they had done while on the trip, and the other what had happened on shore; and between them the time passed away rapidly and pleasantly until dusk.

Mr. Bemis and Mr. Taylor had not yet returned from their fishing excursion. They had built a light raft, and spent most of their time in paddling about the pond and fishing for trout, of which they had caught some immense fellows; and gaffing lobsters. They had kept the family well supplied with both these luxuries. Max now opened

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half a dozen large lobsters and placed them upon the table as a side dish to a huge platter of boiled corned-beef and potatoes, which he had been preparing, to which were added a dish of greens in the shape of beet tops, with a few young beets which had been planted when they first came ashore, and which now proved an excellent substitute for spinach.

The supper was soon prepared, but not before Mr. Taylor and Mr. Bemis had both appeared, looking like two tramps, bringing between them a huge string of trout.

"Any fishing?" laughed Freddie, as the two appeared in the doorway.

"Hullo!" exclaimed Mr. Taylor, as he saw the boys, — "where'd you come from? did you find the *Sea Foam?*"

"Oh, yes," replied Fred, "there was plenty of that, and that's about all; but what big fellows," looking at and handling the trout admiringly and daintily, "where did you get them?"

"Over in the pond," responded the former. "Come with us next week and we'll show you how to fish!"

To this the boys readily agreed, while Max soon had several of the fishes cleaned and in the frying-pan, with pork scraps and Indian meal.

"Supper is ready, now!" exclaimed Max, lifting the fish out of the pan into a platter and putting pieces of crisp pork beside them. A grand rush for the table told plainly how they were ready for supper.

The following day being Sunday, it was decided not to start on the Up trip until Monday, thus giving to all, as was much needed, a day of rest.

Sunday was a very quiet day; though blustering and somewhat foggy, nothing of importance transpired and

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nobody did anything out of the usual course of the work of the day. When Monday came everybody was well rested and prepared for the week's work.

When the boys had awakened and were up and dressed, they found the men already down before them and hard at work upon the boats; mending the sails in various places; strengthening the masts; scraping off the oar handles; and cleaning out the cuddies. The water kegs had been thoroughly washed out and were draining, mouth downward, on some bushes near by.

Pretty soon all three of the boys got together in a corner of the old storehouse, or of "the old stor'us," as everybody now insisted upon calling it, and held a most mysterious conference. In about fifteen minutes the "affairs of state" seemed to have been settled, and the meeting broke up.

"*Now*, what yer going to do, boys?" shouted Mr. Cooper, as the boys were disappearing around a corner of the shed.

"We're not going to do anything," replied Allie, who was in the rear of the others, "we're going to let some one else do the doing this time."

"What *can* those boys be up to?" thought Mr. Cooper, but he said nothing.

An hour later at the breakfast table, the boys announced, in a most unexpected manner, by unanimous vote, not to accompany the boats on the Up trip, then in process of preparation. The only clue to their reason for not going, that anybody could find, were Freddie's words: "We think we've done our part, and now we're going to stay home and enjoy ourselves, and let the rest of the party get on as best they can."

Aware that there would be a vacancy in Mr. Ready's

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boat, the next question was to fill it. Mr. Bemis was of course obliged to take their place, and as he and Mr. Taylor had been much together of late, the latter offered to accompany him.

"All right, boys!" exclaimed Mr. Taylor. "You stay at home this time and we'll take your place."

This was evidently very satisfactory, for the boys nodded to each other, and could barely conceal their satisfaction, — while Mr. Bemis looked on rather glumly, though Mr. Taylor, now that he had entered into the spirit of the thing, seemed intensely satisfied with the arrangement.

It was about the middle of the forenoon when the boats were provisioned and ready for their departure. All hands were at length summoned, and the boats got under way. Thus for the second time the explorers proceeded down the bay, — this time with a good wind behind them and on their way *up* the coast.

The boys fired a parting salute from their guns, and halloed until they were hoarse, from the shore, as the boats got farther and farther away.

"There!" exclaimed Fred, as the boats disappeared around the bend, "we did it!"

"Did what?" cried Eva, who was standing near.

"Made those two great lazy men do their share of the work," replied Freddie.

"What 'two great lazy men'?" asked Eva.

"Why, Mr. Taylor and Mr. Bemis," replied her brother. "They haven't done a stitch of work since we've been here. They needn't think that they're going to live in clover all the time, and we do all the work."

"Hooray, boys! now for a time," cried Allie, as he swung his hat and cheered at the top of his voice.

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"We haven't been a mile inland since we were here," put in John. "I say, all hands equip for an expedition."

His suggestion was greeted with a hearty cheer, and while Allie and Fred hurried off to clean their guns and load some shells, John put his botany case in order and prepared to collect flowers, lichens and mosses. He had already gathered a large collection in each of these branches, and was now eager to try his luck inland.

The boys soon had their hunting outfits all prepared, and, snatching a hasty lunch, started off.

"This has been a day of surprises," said Eva, gaily, to her mother, as she entered the house after bidding good-bye to the boys. "I wonder what will come next?"

"I guess it will be washing the dishes," laughed Max, as he rolled up his sleeves and began dipping out some water from the big tin boiler on the stove.

"Oh, dear!" sighed that young lady as she proceeded to carry out this part of the programme, "I wish *I* could have a day off."

"I thought you had a good many," remarked her mother.

"Well, I suppose I do, without knowing it," she added, after a minute, and speaking rather low as if she were talking to herself.

"If we can only get home safe," said her mother, "we'll all have a day off, and a good many of them; but let us finish our work, and then see what kind of a surprise we can get up for supper. We will have a lunch at noon, and dinner and supper together at somewhere about dusk." Having said this, Mrs. Benton turned and entered her room.

It will now be necessary to have our attention called, for a short time, in another and different direction.

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Mr. Benton, when he came away from the city, had left his business in the hands of a half-brother of his, who was also a half-partner, and who understood affairs at the office fully as well as did Mr. Benton himself.

The latter had hardly started upon the voyage north, when this half-brother, who was also a bachelor, died, leaving all his property to Mr. Benton. A nephew of this half-brother, who was also in the employ of the firm, acting as book-keeper, had been so fully in the confidence of both brothers, that he had been named as the executor of his uncle's will, and now found himself in full charge of the affairs at the office.

This nephew knew that Mr. Benton intended to return from his trip in the course of a month or six weeks, possibly two months from the time he had started from Boston. Mr. Benton, like a wise business man, had also left instructions that, should he fail to appear within a certain time, a vessel must be sent in search of him, starting from Quebec, following down the coast, as far as Belle Isle, returning on the Newfoundland side then to and around the island of Anticosti, and so back to Quebec.

Mr. Benton had thus doubly provided for himself in case of accident. Should he be wrecked anywhere on the Canada shore bordering the mainland, he felt perfectly safe. Should a disaster occur at the Magdalen Islands in the Gulf, he was in the direct line of vessels communicating between them and the mainland. If on the north shore of St. Lawrence anywhere, or of Newfoundland, the double plan offered itself of hailing some vessel or waiting for his own vessel to find him. Of course they might founder or go down in the middle of the gulf; but, taking it altogether, that cautious gentle-

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man had good reason to congratulate himself upon his own precautions.

Hal Weatherby, for that was the nephew's name, having waited for three months and a week to a day, for the return of his employer, and having failed in all his endeavors to hear from Mr. Benton, had at length gone to Quebec, chartered a schooner, hired a captain, crew, and pilot, and, leaving affairs in charge of the assistant bookkeeper, started off, pursuing the course advised by Mr. Benton himself, — putting into every possible harbor, watching for any signals, and searching in every possible direction for the lost ones. He changed the plan, somewhat, however; by first coasting entirely around Anticosti Island, and then following the north shore down.

It now happened, very curiously, that the day before the boats had started *up* the coast, the wind began to blow strong from the northeast; soon it increased into a regular gale.

The gale had come up so suddenly that the party on board the schooner had barely discovered it before it was upon them.

"All hands on deck, there, to take in sail!" thundered Captain French. "Lively, now, lively!"

The men all flew to their stations, while the man at the wheel put the schooner about and let her scud before the blast.

"Rocks ahead!" shouted the lookout.

Just then the thin cloud of fog which had been obscuring everything, in spite of the wind, opened sufficiently to allow the men to see that they were within a few rods of the rocks.

As yet the mainsail had not been lowered; so, by a skillful turn of the wheel, the schooner was brought up

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into the wind sufficiently to enable her to escape this new danger. And now the men hastened to lower the sails. The topsails had already been taken in. The mainsail was now lowered and furled.

At length old Captain French, the pilot, insisting that he knew where he was, and that the rocks they had so nearly been dashed against formed part of a harbor entrance, the vessel was kept off once more and headed directly in shore again. As they approached the rocks the vessel's head was sheered and they quickly found themselves in a narrow pass defended by rugged rocks on either side, and in a swift but deep current that carried them on at a most furious rate. A moment later and they rounded the point into a large and capacious harbor.

"Down with the foresail!" shouted the pilot, as a gust of wind, stronger than any that had come before, struck the canvas.

"Wait a moment!" shouted the pilot, as the captain, who was at the wheel, not seeing the danger, gave the wheel a turn that brought the schooner's head before the wind.

"It's all right!" shouted the captain, not understanding matters and giving the wheel another turn, "let her go."

Her pilot tried to tell the captain not to put her before the wind again, but with the rattling of everything on board there was no possibility of his hearing, and so the pilot simply waved his hand violently in the opposite direction, but to no purpose.

Moments are hours in a gale at sea; and so here, all in one instant the vessel had entered a harbor in a tremendous gale. The crew had started to lower her fore-

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sail, when the sail stuck, and the gale had struck the canvas with a blow equal to that of a loaded cannon. For a moment every inch of the old craft shivered from stem to stern, and while the boom was swaying backward and forward, with a single crack it snapped in two like a pipestem.

It was fortunate for all on board that at this same instant the fury of the gale, as if it had accomplished its work, abated, and the men were enabled to get the sail down at last. It required but a few moments to take in all sail, and bring the schooner to an anchorage; but hardly had this been accomplished, and all hands were beginning to breathe once more, when the wind began to blow again with redoubled fury, as if fairly aroused to anger that so far it had been enabled to inflict so little damage upon the gallant little craft and its resolute crew.

"Put out both anchors!" shouted the captain, "and just as much chain as you can spare."

The order was obeyed, instantly, and the schooner rode in safety. Still the wind blew with all its force, threatening to send her at any moment against the rocks on the other side of the harbor; but all had been done that it was possible to do to save her, and watches were posted; in fact, captain, pilot and crew, — all, remained on deck the whole night.

"The worst blow I was ever in," remarked the honest old pilot.

"Oh, 'tis nothing!" put in Billy, one of the seamen, noted for his fearlessness, or for never giving way to his fears, and for always having seen "something worse," or, "something better than that." "Oh, that's nothing," and he rubbed his hands together, and balanced himself, seaman-like, first on one foot and then on the other.

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"Hullo! I say, cook! can't you give us some coffee?"

"Aye, aye, sir!" shouted the cook, as he appeared out of the fore hatch, "all ready, sir;" and all hands were soon drinking hot coffee and munching hardtack.

Still the wind blew all night, now off and now on, fiercely and terribly. It was a fearful strain for the little vessel, but she bore it splendidly. The anchors and the chains held, — in spite of the fears of the captain, pilot, and crew.

It was a happy set of men who, about four next morning, the wind having subsided, sought their bunks to sleep.

It was nearly noon before they began to appear on deck. It was a calm, lovely day, the surface of the harbor unruffled, and no sign of the frightful storm of the previous day could be seen anywhere around, save in the broken boom of the schooner's foremast.

After breakfast the men set about repairing the damage as best they might.

They took their axes and set out for a small growth of fairly large-sized spruces, that they saw not far away, and then, after considerable difficulty in finding just what they wanted, cut down three tall, straight, tough young spruces, and out of them formed three poles about eight feet long and four inches thick. These were chipped of their outer bark all around, so that nothing but the white wood remained. Then they were rounded off excepting upon one side, where they were flattened or even concaved a very little. With these over their shoulders the men returned to the schooner. There they found about twenty fathoms of good stout three-quarter inch hemp rope, and a long iron crowbar, and were ready for work.

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The pieces of the broken boom were now put in place, the spruce poles laid at equal distances from each other around the boom, with their centers opposite the broken part, and nailed in place. One end of the rope was then fastened securely to the boom and the piece wound round and round the whole. The crowbar acted as a lever to strain the rope to its utmost at each turn, and the end fastened as at the beginning.

"There," exclaimed the captain, when all was finished. "There; now we've got as good a boom as we had to start with."

Then the sailors rigged the foresail in its place again, and soon the schooner was all ready to start once more.

"Now we can go ahead flying," cried the pilot, in great delight.

All this work was of course not accomplished without considerable time elapsing, and, when all was in readiness for starting off once more, it was growing on toward dark again.

"I guess we had better stay here one more night," remarked the captain, "then we will be all fresh to start off early in the morning."

This was responded to heartily by all, — the tired sailors being quite willing to have a good night's rest after their work.

While they were getting ready for supper, a small boat was seen to round the corner of the rocks and make directly for the mouth of the harbor; soon another one followed the first, then both jibed, and in five minutes each party was in plain sight of the other.

Nearer and nearer came the boats, and though it was almost dusk, the faces of both parties began to grow plainer every minute.

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"Great Scott!" exclaimed Mr. Taylor, who, with Mr. Bemis and Mr. Ready, were in the foremost boat. "If that isn't Hal Weatherby it's his departed spirit."

"Well, I declare!" exclaimed Hal Weatherby, at almost the same moment, "if that isn't young Taylor, and Bemis, and Mr. Ready himself!"

"Hullo!"

"Hullo!" sounded from either side at the same time; and instantly a dozen caps were wildly waving and beating the air at the same time, while the old shores resounded with yells and screeches of every possible variety.

Five minutes later, and the whole party were together on the schooner's deck, embracing each other as if they had all suddenly risen from the dead.

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CHAPTER XVII.

AN ARRIVAL.

IT was a jolly crowd indeed that took supper together that night, and a hearty supper it was. The best of everything that the two boats and the schooner afforded were brought out and shared between both parties, and all had a capital good time of it.

"The wind to-day," remarked Mr. Taylor, while they were lying around and making themselves comfortable after their supper, "has been rather an uncertain quantity, with us at least."

"How so?" questioned Mr. Weatherby.

"Why! we started out of our harbor with a fine breeze behind us, and just as soon as we were fairly outside and had turned our prows westward, it died down and left us to lie around in a dead calm or pull at the oars. We chose the latter course, and now the wind turns and blows against us as hard as it did awhile ago at our backs. My hands are covered with blisters," he added.

"So are mine," faintly rejoined Mr. Bemis.

"How far is it to where you are stopping?" asked Mr. Weatherby.

"It couldn't be over ten or twelve miles, at most," replied Mr. Ready.

"It seemed a hundred and twelve," said Mr. Bemis.

"What time do you make it?"

"It's about thirteen minutes of five," said Mr. Taylor, looking at his watch.

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"Who's the boss of the party?" laughed Mr. Weatherby. "You are, Ready, of course!"

Mr. Ready looked somewhat sad as he pointed to Mr. Cooper, and then told the reason why.

Mr. Weatherby then called Mr. Cooper and Mr. Ready to one side and a brief consultation took place, — the result of which will soon appear.

All the afternoon Mrs. Benton, Max, and Eva had been bravely struggling with roast ducks and a monstrous plum pudding, — "a regular brown Christmas one," laughed Eva; but somehow the ducks didn't pick good, the dressing didn't mix right, the roasting-pan wasn't big enough, and the question was how to cook the ducks and pudding so as to have them both done and hot at the same time.

All three puzzled their. brains the whole afternoon over this problem; how they finally accomplished it no one, not even Max, could tell; but at half-past six, when all were summoned to supper, no one but the cooks and Mr. Benton appeared before a supper set for six, and almost large enough for sixteen, — for the ducks and pudding were only extras, gotten up especially for the boys, who were supposed to be half famished from their trip "down along!" as Eva said laughingly.

"Well, now!" exclaimed Mrs. Benton, "here's our supper and no one to eat it."

As seven o'clock came, and no boys, those at home sat down, in a most doleful frame of mind, to eat it themselves or so much of it as they were able.

Mr. Benton seemed to feel in an unusually pleasant frame of mind, for some reason or other, and they all sat for a long time discussing the final end of the banquet, — the plum pudding.

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While they were laughing and talking together, Mr. Benton pulled out his watch and looked at it.

"Eight o'clock, — and ten minutes past," he added, holding it closer to his eyes to see more plainly, as it was an old-fashioned watch, with a gold face and gold numbers around it. "I declare, those boys ought to be put to bed without their supper for staying away so late and causing us so much worry."

Mr. Benton's genial face looked very little like worry, as it beamed upon all around him.

"Oh, no!" cried Eva, "what should we do with all this supper that's left?"

"Ah!" replied Mr. Benton. "H'm! Yes! as a sanitary measure you are right."

"What's all that noise outside!" exclaimed Mrs. Benton, turning her head and looking somewhat excited as she glanced uneasily at the door.

"Wind or geese, I guess," laughed Eva. "Why you look just like Mrs. Weatherby, ma, when you do that," said Eva.

At the name of Weatherby, Mr. Benton started, almost tumbling over with his chair, and looked so serious that Eva almost cried, from mere fright, though she did not know why. In a minute Mr. Benton regained his position, and smiled, as he said:

"We'll wait a little longer, I don't think that we are floored *quite* yet."

Then he chuckled audibly.

"Are you crazy?" demanded Mrs. Benton.

"Ah-h! H'm-m!" responded Mr. Benton, rubbing his chin very meekly, "not that I am aware; but that flock of geese must be to remain so long, so near the house. I hear them again, they must have landed."

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At that moment the geese grew noisier than ever, and even seemed to have turned themselves into human beings; a moment later the door burst open and the crowd that wedged their way inside was something formidable. First came Mr. Taylor, then Mr. Bemis, then Mr. Ready and a tall, pleasant-looking man right behind him, then Mr. Cooper, and finally three boys with their hands full of partridges and a large, green-looking animal, with a broad flat tail and dark fur over the skin, — at any other time this alone would have been the center of attraction, but just now the tall, pleasant-looking man occupied everybody's attention.

"Ah! Mr. Weatherby. Good evening, sir; good evening, sir!" and Mr. Benton jumped from his seat and rushed across the room, notwithstanding his natural desire to be and appear perfectly cool, and self-possessed even in such a situation, and grasped and shook warmly the hand of Hal Weatherby, who returned the greeting just as fervently as it was given. "Sit down, sir; sit down; we were just about to dine, — you will of course join us."

Mr. Benton's desire to appear perfectly cool, and his impulse to be as glad as anybody (more glad perhaps than any one, if the truth were known), to welcome just that particular person, at just that particular and critical time, so amused every one that all laughed heartily, — and "for nearly ten minutes it was difficult," as Miss Eva remarked afterwards, "to even hear oneself think."

"What do you want to hear yourself think for? what nonsense," said Freddie.

"Max," said Mrs. Benton, "I don't see but that you will have to set the dinner over again; callers, you know!" she added, smiling.

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"Ah, yes, mam," replied Max, laughing in his turn, "such callers mustn't go away hungry, that would never do."

In a little while the table had been reset, and there was still found enough to satisfy even so large a crowd as were the new comers. At the end the plum pudding came on looking as large and as round as ever, and apparently not at all diminished by the inroads of the four who had preceded the new comers. It was, taking it all together, probably the pleasantest tea or rather dinner party that the old house had ever known.

After dinner Mr. Weatherby related the news, brought out bundle after bundle of papers, and letters, and packages for every one, so that it was past midnight before anybody seemed aware that it was even ten o'clock.

"I suppose that we must all go to bed, if we want to do any sleeping to-night," remarked Mr. Benton.

"We can all go to bed," said Fred, "but I'm afraid there won't be much sleeping done to-night."

"Or this morning, either," laughed Allie.

"It's the hardest work to get you children packed off to bed," remarked Mrs. Benton.

"If you'll only let me clear off the table and eat my supper," said Max, unable to stand the pressure any longer, "I'll be very thankful."

Mr. Benton jumped up and looked very smilingly over to Mrs. Benton, as he remarked, "My dear, I think the cook would like his supper."

And now the party dispersed as quickly as only tired and excited people can, leaving the cook in full possession.

To say that confusion reigned the next day among the

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members of the family and the adherents of the Bentons, would be putting it mildly, to say the very least, while Mr. Benton, the head of all, was the happiest and most confused of them all.

Hal Weatherby stood by and enjoyed the confusion and laughed with the rest of them. Most of the morning was spent in doing nothing, that is "in flying around like mad, and not doing a thing," — at least so Eva expressed it, and it was "dinner time before the morning had half gone," — so Eva said again. At any rate, just as dinner was being served the boys rushed frantically into the house to say that "a big ship" was "just coming into the bay."

Everybody jumped up from the table at this news, and crowded the door and windows to get a view of this wonder.

Of course it was no other than Mr. Hal Weatherby's *Snow Flake* that was "coming down."

Mr. Benton gazed at her with admiration, and then remarked, "Did you say that she was good for a thousand quintals of fish besides all these passengers, Mr. Weatherby? You are quite sure of the fact?"

Mr. Hal Weatherby laughed heartily, but replied:

"Yes, for twice that amount, if need be, — we'll show you by the end of the week."

"The end of the week!" repeated Fred, in a most dismal and doleful tone of voice. "Why, I'd undertake to load her up, with all these men to help, in less than twenty-four hours. I don't know how the rest feel," he added, after a few moments' pause, "but *I* want to get away from here just as soon as I possibly can."

"There's enterprise for you," remarked Mr. Benton, looking admiringly upon Fred. "Those boys might

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make smart business men, Mr. Weatherby, if they'd only stick to it."

"Stick to it," repeated Fred, "we boys have done our share, Mr. Weatherby, you may depend; ask Eva."

A smile went around at this remark.

"I declare!" exclaimed Fred, "I almost forgot my partridges and my beaver."

At that moment a small gray animal ran lightly across the floor and backed up into one corner of the room, growling and hissing so spitefully that all were glad to get out of its way. It had a big round bunch of feathers in its teeth, which it was shaking and worrying between its growls, much as a small dog plays with a ball of rags. Mr. Weatherby jumped and nearly upset the dinner table in his eagerness to get out of the way.

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed Mr. Weatherby, "what kind of a machine do you call that?"

"'Tisn't a machine at all," said Eva, resentfully, "it's only my dear Spit. Here! Spit! Spit! come here, sir! What have you got there? What are you doing, sir?"

But Spit was anything but a dear Spit, just then, and he continued to growl and shake the bunch of feathers most furiously and spitefully.

"I declare!" exclaimed Freddie, just then, "if that miserable thing hasn't got one of my partridges," and Fred made a lunge at the small cat with a broomstick.

"Let him alone!" screamed Eva.

All the time Freddie was poking Spit, and Spit was spitting, in great style.

"Oh Fire! Fire! Fire!" screamed Eva, at the top of her voice.

Everybody started on the run, and all asked in a breath, "Where? where?"

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"Oh, no!" cried Eva, excitedly.

"Fire! Fire! Fire!" cried everybody.

"No, no!" shouted Eva, as loud as she could. "Spit and Fire are each eating one of Fred's partridges; there goes Fire now, up the loft, stop him some one."

Eva had changed the names of her pets a dozen times, to say the very least, since her first names of Popsy and Topsy.

The two cats, now well-grown and somewhat savage, though tamed considerably by good food and petting, were finally captured, tied once more to the ropes from which they both had broken loose, as they had often done before, and the partridges, saving several bites and the loss of a large quantity of feathers, recovered.

At length all sat down to dinner. The bean soup never tasted better, and a small variety of vegetables, including cabbage, beets, and new potatoes, which Mr. Weatherby had brought with him, were eaten with the greatest of relish, — being things which they had not had since leaving home, and also reminding them that there were plenty more where these came from.

"Hadn't we better go home by Quebec?" asked Mr. Weatherby. "We can get rid of all our remaining dry goods and groceries at a small port about opposite Anticosti Island that I know of, for they told me as much when I was there. Then we can get a good price for our fish at Quebec and save considerable."

"I believe you told me that you chartered the schooner at Quebec?" replied Mr. Benton.

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Weatherby.

"Then go back there again, by all means; you'd only double your charter by going to Boston the other way, and I doubt if even the extra price, if you get it, for

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your fish in the Boston markets would cover you. Yes, go to Quebec, by all means," said Mr. Benton.

"By the way" said Mr. Weatherby, "I've a little surprise for you, I think. You remember that Duncan property?"

"You refer to the real estate which we had as trustees for that California gold digger, who would persist in working a dead Californian gold mine to staying at home and being a rich man from the real estate left him by his uncle?"

"The very same."

"Well, what of him?" asked Mr. Benton.

"Why, he has died, and left all his property to his trustees, and —"

"You don't say so!" said Mr. Benton, in amazement.

"And," continued Mr. Weatherby, "the gold mine, besides, in which he struck a lead three days before he died, that they say will pan out rich too."

"Well! that *is* news," said Mr. Benton.

"I suppose that all of that is yours, now," remarked Mr. Weatherby, in rather a sad tone of voice.

"Ah! Hal, my boy, you should be cheerful when you bear such cheerful news. We will *all* share it. You've only to live in such a place as this four months to enjoy it thoroughly, be glad you came, to wish to come again — for the air, mind you, for the air — and declare that nothing would ever tempt you to live here, except from dire necessity, for over twenty-four hours to agree with me fully;" and having delivered his mind of a great weight, he tilted back in his chair, crossed his legs, and beamed most cordially over at Mr. Weatherby.

Hal Weatherby jumped from his chair, grasped Mr. Benton's hand, and gave it a squeeze with both of his;

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then turned suddenly and looked out of the window very intently.

"Well, boys," laughed Mr. Benton, "now you've been to Labrador, I suppose you wouldn't mind going to California? If everything is satisfactory, you know. Somebody's got to go, you know, and look after this wild cat gold mine. Somebody must get fifty per cent. commission for selling it or working it, if it's good for anything; and we might just as well see to it ourselves and save the money."

"And, now," said Mr. Benton, rising, "every one of you, men and boys, get out of here and load that vessel. The quicker she's loaded the quicker we'll start for home."

"Hooray!" cried Fred, bounding out of the door, and waving his hat and shouting in the intensity of his delight. "Where are you going?" cried he, as he saw Mr. Weatherby and Mr. Taylor slinking away, almost on tip-toe, behind the house, each with a big fish pole over his shoulder.

Hal Weatherby's appealing look, and plaintive "just once, you know," were too much, and even Fred couldn't find it in his heart to say a word, eager as he was to get home.

The men worked hard all the afternoon, taking out the ballast from the schooner and loading in the codfish.

"Them's all good fish," remarked Captain French, looking at them critically, and picking over a few of the bundles so that he could see how they were as to size and quality. "Them's all good fish, ought to bring sixteen ter eighteen good English shilling."

"How much is that?" asked Eva, who was near by, looking on.

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"Oh, thet's fo' to fo' an' a haf," said Captain French.

"How funny he is," remarked Eva to Fred.

The work of loading the schooner went on all the afternoon.

The fish were packed away in the hold and seemed likely to fill it up pretty full. Then there were the remains of the stores to be put in, and all of the boxes and bales of dry goods and small wares that had been taken out for trade with the natives.

"The hardest work," said Eva, "will be at the last end, when we come to leave all of our beautiful little house, and the garden, and the brook."

"And the wharf, and the water, and the hill, and the lake, and the trout, and everything we've grown so to love, behind us," added Allie.

"And then," said Eva, "we must take Spit and Fire home with us."

"Oh, dear!" sighed Fred, "I never expect to shoot so many ducks again in all my life."

"No, no!" added Allie, "or have so much fun, and — then — I almost want to stay here the rest of my life. I'm sure we could find enough to live on, and there'd be no awful board bill, such as Jackson talks and worries so much about, to pay. Well, boys! let's stay."

"Guess we'd better go home," remarked John, "I want to go to college."

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed Fred, unable any longer to hold his patience. "Oh, yes! *go* to college, *take* the entrance prize, *take* the valedictory, *take* all the first prizes, take everything you can get, and then —"

"Then sigh like Alexander for more worlds to conquer," laughed John.

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"No, turn into a pig and grunt, because you can't get enough or anybody to scratch your back."

Freddie had no patience with John's desire to "cram" all the time; this was the first time that he had ever spoken out his thoughts, and now he was vexed with himself for doing it and with everybody and everything else around him.

"Boys, boys!" cried Mrs. Benton, from the door of the house, "I wish you'd come and get some more wood."

Glad of the change in the conversation, the boys rushed off, pell mell, to do as their mother had requested.

At last supper time came, and so, as it was found that another day, or a part of a day at least, would be required to complete the work of loading the schooner, it was decided to make it a grand thanksgiving day, and have their final grand dinner at dusk, so as to start off the next morning, bright and early, if pleasant weather would permit. As one "grand dinner" was so like another, and the variety always limited, it seemed to amuse Max immensely, so that he laughed heartily whenever anybody mentioned it to him.

There were some improvements in this special "grand dinner" which had not been in the previous ones, in spite of Max's laugh: — there were boiled cabbage, boiled beets, boiled and baked new potatoes and sweet potatoes; squash pies, from fresh squashes; green sweet corn, celery, roasted ducks, roasted partridges, and an immense rice pudding with raisins in it.

"Well, Max," said Mr. Benton, when he saw all these things, "I think you had better come home with us, and cook for the family. You may consider yourself engaged. Six months at home, and I'd set a table with the best on Commonwealth Avenue."

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CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CONCLUSION.

IT was nearly noon of the next day before everything was on board the *Snow Flake.*

Eva, with tearful eyes, went out to visit her little garden-patch for the last time, and, more as an act of habit than anything else, to water the plants and pick a bunch of flowers for the table.

"I declare, it makes me feel like crying to part with them," exclaimed she.

"We'll plant them in our dream-castle and see them every night," laughed Freddie, good-naturedly.

"Come, come, children," cried Mrs. Benton; "have you taken all your things on board?"

As four voices responded, "Yes 'em," Mrs. Benton turned away with the words:

"Extraordinary. I never knew children, before, that hadn't more to bring away with them at the last moment than at any other time."

By and by a voice from the wharf shouted, "All aboard!" and the last of the party hurried down to the wharf and into the boats and were rowed to the schooner.

"Is everybody and everything aboard?" asked Mr. Benton.

"Guess 'tis," answered Mr. Ready.

"We'll hope that nothing is left."

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"Mr. Taylor has left something," laughed Allie, as he saw that gentleman disappearing into the cabin.

"What have *I* left?" asked Mr. Taylor.

"Three fish hooks in the lake," responded the young torment.

Instead of getting provoked the latter laughed good-naturedly and replied:

"Well, if I haven't left anything else, that's nothing; but you have left something, also."

"What have I left?" said Allie.

"You better go back and stay all winter and then you might find some of them."

"What is it, tell me?"

"Good resolutions about studying your lessons," laughed Mr. Taylor, as he disappeared into the cabin, while the laugh remained on Allie.

And now the order was given to hoist sail, — and as the anchor chain clinked to the pump of the windlass, the sails were set, and the *Snow Flake* slipped the little harbor, and the home voyage was begun.

Nearly the whole family stood at the stern rail taking a farewell look at the place that had been so pleasant a home for them during the summer. As the schooner rounded the point Eva took her handkerchief hastily out of her pocket and dashed away a tear; then, as if ashamed to be seen crying, she gave it a parting wave, and everybody took out theirs and followed her example. A moment more and all the well-known features of the place were hidden behind the bluff and left, perhaps forever, but as a picture in the memory never to be forgotten.

And now the wind began to freshen, and the *Snow Flake* scud before it like a gull upon the wing. Faster

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and faster she seemed to go, until orders were given to take in the topsails, then the outer jibs, and finally both fore and mainsails were double-reefed and put wing and wing; then she seemed literally to fly.

All hands retired to the cabin early that night, and by dusk the side lights were out, beside the one in the cabin and the binnacle.

All night long the gallant little schooner traveled with might and main, and the next day and the next night, too. The morning of the third day out, a dim, dark mass of cloud-like substance appeared on the port side of the vessel, away in the distance.

"Land!" cried the man at the wheel.

"Where is it?" asked the captain.

"Anticosti, on the port side!" fairly screamed the man at the wheel, in reply.

Towards noon a little white speck was seen in the dim distance, on the starboard side.

"That's the port we're going to," pointed the captain to Mr. Benton, who was standing near.

About four in the afternoon the little schooner was snugly anchored in the harbor, and all hands trooping on shore once more.

Here Mr. Benton easily disposed of the remainder of his stock of provisions, dry goods, and nicknacks, to good advantage (to be retraded with the Indians for furs) and immediately set to work unloading. That night all slept on shore, and were well fed with real milk, new butter on their bread, and cream in their tea and coffee.

"This is almost as good as getting home," cried Eva, in transports.

Early the next morning all were on board once more, and off the *Snow Flake* sped towards Quebec.

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A day of calm, one of pleasant weather, two of fog, and a fifth fair day again, brought them to where they could see both banks of the St. Lawrence. It seemed as if they were sailing right into a mass of hills, with green slopes and pleasant farming lands, as the banks on either side grew narrower and narrower. Soon the houses began to appear, then to grow more numerous, and, as the weather continued fine, and the wind not too strong, the family would bring their stools on deck, or throw some shawl or spread over the cabin deck, and sit there and watch the beautiful scenery as they advanced and it changed.

Seventeen days after starting, the *Snow Flake* drew up to the wharf at Quebec. It was about noon, and all repaired to the hotel for dinner.

Later in the day, Mr. Benton had no difficulty in disposing of all of his fish at a good bargain, and then he paid off the crew and the charter of the vessel, and bade the men good-bye as they took their leave, perhaps forever, of those who had been their summer companions. It was really an affecting sight to see those rough, brown and brawny men draw their sleeves across their eyes as they took their final leave. Mr. Benton was careful to see to it that each had a little present besides the regular amount due them, and then the family returned to the hotel for tea and the night.

"There!" exclaimed Mr. Benton, as they were being driven to the hotel. "All the bills paid and forty-nine hundred dollars in pocket, besides what I had before," laying particular emphasis on the last portion of the clause.

"Well done," cried Mr. Weatherby, from out of the darkness of one corner of the coach.

Then the driver stopped, and they all got out and entered the hotel together and were shown to their rooms.

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After supper came the barber's shop, then the bath tubs, then clean new undergarments all around for the next day, and new suits of clothes, and new hats. In fact, you would hardly have known the party twenty-four hours after they had landed, so great had been the change.

The next day a party of very respectable looking people paraded the "Terrace," and looked down upon the waters and the streets beneath them, and drank in the delicious mild air about them, as if they were a party of tourists from some fashionable summer resort, instead of a lot of rescued castaways.

"Well," said Mr. Benton, "this is even finer than I had expected."

"What is?" asked Allie.

"Oh, everything is — the air, the sights about us, and the situation in general."

"Yes," cried Mr. Taylor, enthusiastically, "the 'situation in general' *is* much improved; decidedly so, decidedly so!"

After staying in Quebec a couple of days, they all took the cars for Boston.

A letter had given the jolly, good-natured cook notice of their coming, and she was ready waiting for them with a regular Thanksgiving dinner of roast turkey and mince pies.

May's face fairly shone as she greeted them, and kissed them all around affectionately.

"Oh, May!" cried Eva, clasping her sister fervently. "I'm *so* sorry you were not with us, such a perfectly splendid and romantic time as we've had."

"Why, Eva, you know that *somebody* had to stay home. And I'd much rather hear you tell about it than to go myself."

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It was weeks before May got the whole story. Each one had something new and different to tell, and each different sides of the same story. Everybody soon got comfortably settled down once more; the children went to school, and the older folks attended to the business affairs of the household. Winter came upon them suddenly one morning in the shape of a tremendous snow-storm, which had fallen during the night, — but this time they were all "prepared for it."

When Mr. Benton returned to his business he found affairs so satisfactory and well conducted that he was surprised. Everything had been done that could be done for the good of the firm, and everything was in good working order. The business had been legally transferred to Mr. Benton's name, and, one morning, everybody was surprised (and no one more so than a certain individual himself), by seeing a new firm's name, in large gilt letters on a black board sign, of

BENTON & WEATHERBY.

directly over Mr. Benton's doorway.

Hal Weatherby was walking down Pearl Street that morning, thinking, to himself, of lots of little "I wishes," "whys," "ifs," etc., when somebody passed him and touched their hat pleasantly. Then somebody else, then several people nodded good-naturedly.

"What does all this mean?" thought Hal to himself.

Just as he turned a corner he saw quite a crowd looking up curiously at a big sign above them. Mechanically he turned up his eyes also and read:

BENTON AND WEATHERBY.

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He stood still and stared with utter amazement. The crowd opened to let him pass, and all nodded or touched their hats. Hal rushed breathlessly into the counting-room. Everybody made way for him and smiled at his evident amazement. He rushed past them all and into Mr. Benton's private room, where he sank down upon the sofa quite overcome. Mr. Benton took a chair beside him, and matters were soon explained and arranged to the satisfaction of all parties.

The boys now gave themselves up to study, and, under Mr. Taylor's directions, made real progress. They attended school regularly, and as Mr. Taylor had been chosen principal, the school succeeded wonderfully. Everybody was pleased with his management, and he became the general favorite of both scholars and their parents. The more they knew him the better they liked him. The boys all tried to see which could please him the most and have the best lessons, and he was as eager as they for the recesses and holidays, taking part in their sports and encouraging them in every way possible.

During these long winter evenings the boys were busy at something besides their lessons. They had bird skins to stuff and mount, eggs to number, name, and arrange, and a host of things to do. They built them a cabinet. An old room in the back shed of the house served as a "museum building," and they formed themselves into a Natural History Society. The name of the Society was printed in black letters on the outside of the door:

"THE AUK."

"What do you call it 'The Auk' for?" asked Eva, of Freddie, one day.

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"Oh!" said Freddie, "girls don't know anything about these things, but I'll tell you, if you won't tell anybody. You see the auk was the name of a bird that is now known to be extinct, all dead you know, so this is in honor of him; and you see we are *supposed* to be very wise about things that we *really* know very little of."

"Oh, yes," exclaimed Eva, "I see. I'm so glad that there is at least one person that has the honesty to confess his ignorance."

"Isn't it Shakespeare," said Freddie, not heeding the interruption, "that says 'most ignorant of what he's most assured'?"

"Now, then," said Eva, "that spoils it all; you shouldn't boast, Freddie. You might be like the green bay tree. It made an awful big show, but they looked for it, and lo! it was not."

"No!" exclaimed Freddie, "that's not *me*, but the other fellow!"

"But there's the dinner bell," said Freddie, "and I thought it was about ten o'clock."

"That's because 'tis Saturday," laughed Eva.

"Well, I'm very sure 'tis dinner time, but I didn't know it," shouted Fred, as he rushed for the wash-bowl.

An hour later and Allie and Freddie were seen marching off towards the woods, the back way, with their guns on their shoulders and their knapsacks on their backs.

"The Auk" grew and prospered, and furnished amusement for many a lonely evening and dreary Saturday.

The boys were never idle for a minute, and were always devising some new amusement for their own sakes and the contentment of the rest of the family, whose chief happiness lay in seeing them happy and always busily employed.

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One day Mr. Benton was in the city looking about in the bookstores for some Christmas presents for his nephews and nieces and children, and came across a book entitled, Our Boys in Labrador, — or something of the kind. He bought the book and read it through. He always believed that Mr. Murphy wrote that book, but could never get him to say so.

At last the long winter months wore away and the snow began to disappear. Spring set in with a long storm of fog and rain that, when it cleared, showed bare ground once more, and hillsides and fields covered with patches of green, the faintest imaginable, yet none the less welcome as signs of what were soon to come. The robins, the bluebirds, and the linnets soon began to appear and fill the air with song and sweet melody.

One night, after everybody had gone to bed, and in the midst of a pouring rain storm, the door-bell received a violent jerk, then a series of pulls, that made it jingle as if the house was on fire.

Mr. Benton rushed to the window, opened it, put out his head, and in no very mild terms demanded who was there.

A tall man, almost smothered in a big hat and cape cloak, immediately inquired if that was Mr. Benton.

The reply being yes, he further stated that he had very important business that needed immediate attention and requested an interview.

Mr. Benton hurriedly dressed himself, and went down to the door, and let his visitor in, who immediately threw off his cloak and hat and disclosed, to Mr. Benton's utter amazement, his own brother. The long lost returned, who was supposed to have been dead for ten years, having gone to Australia, and had never been heard from since.

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"Well, Ned!" exclaimed Mr. Benton, shaking his brother's hand most heartily, "thank the Lord you're home once more."

The whole house was immediately aroused, and a lunch and cup of hot coffee prepared for the prodigal. Then they all listened to his story.

It seemed that he had run away from home, shipped for Australia, reached there in the midst of the gold fever, and immediately gone to work in a mine. For six years he had barely earned his bread, then he at last struck a vein, followed it up, and saved every possible grain, until he had sold out to his partner, and found himself possessed of over a hundred thousand in clear cash. With this he had started for home, to find if any of the family were living, and had just arrived.

The warm-hearted and sincere congratulations from all assured the wanderer of his welcome, and having been shown to his chamber, they all retired for the night once more, to sleep if they could, and to dream of all the wonderful things that had happened.

The next was a gala day, and all the children staid home from school to see Uncle Ned. There was another grand dinner, too. Max — for it was he — again fairly outdid himself, and shed new luster over the Bentons' table.

After the dinner Mr. Benton and his brother spent a long time together discussing business matters and other topics.

By the time they were finished it had been settled that Uncle Ned should come into business with Benton & Weatherby, much to the satisfaction of all parties.

Within a year, the boys heard that Mr. Murphy had gone to the West Indies, probably to write up another

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book; Mr. Furness had gone into the fish business in Montreal; Mr. Jacobs had become a professor in a college; Mr. Bemis was still in Mr. Benton's employ; Mr. Cooper had received full insurance for the loss of the *Sea Foam;* the other members of the party were all well; and Mr. Ready was trying to get up another expedition to Labrador.

And so we leave them.

THE END.

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